

# **The influence of Second World War military service on prominent White South African veterans in opposition politics, 1939–1961**

**By**  
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## **DECLARATION**

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## ABSTRACT

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The nexus between military service and political activism is explored in this thesis. The lives of 153 politically-exposed Second World War veterans are examined. Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of 'Capital' and 'Habitus' are used to examine the ways in which the war shaped the political views of the servicemen as well as the ways in which the ex-servicemen could leverage their war service to further their post-war political careers.

An examination of the fault lines of class and culture, in pre-war, White South Africa, provided crucial insight into the initial habitus and motivation of the volunteer soldier. War-time military service drew together volunteers from every part of South Africa and from each strata of the White community. This provided a common platform to develop shared notions of a common 'South Africanism'. This shared comradeship facilitated their later mobilisation against the National Party (NP) after 1948.

The ex-servicemen, having fought German and Italian forces on several warfronts, had been exposed to the dangers of totalitarianism. As a result, some returned with an embedded intolerance of authoritarianism and, after the war, the Springbok Legion (SL) acted as a clarion call against rising racial intolerance in South Africa. The more affluent ex-servicemen, often in line with family tradition, joined the established United Party (UP). However, the widely unexpected defeat of the UP in 1948 by the NP triggered the ex-servicemen's entry into politics.

After the NP's victory in 1948, a cohort of increasingly-politicised ex-servicemen used the NP's wartime dalliance with fascism to mobilise ex-servicemen *en masse* as the Torch Commando (the Torch). The Torch Commando brought together ex-servicemen, active in parliamentary and extra-parliamentary politics, as a front against the NP in the 1953 elections. However, the UP's defeat in the 1953 elections soon exposed the fault lines, particularly in terms of the ex-servicemen in parliamentary politics. The subsequent implosion of the Torch Commando led to the emergence of the Union Federal Party (UFP), and Liberal Party (LPSA) after the 1953 elections, which marked the end of the ex-serviceman identity as a coherent political identity and revealed an array of diverse political views amongst voting Second World War veterans. Tensions between the conservative and more progressive and liberal ex-servicemen in the UP led to the formation of the Progressive Party (PP) in 1959.

Finally, increased government repression led to the detention of the more radical ex-servicemen in 1956 and 1960. Their subsequent involvement in the formation of armed formations in the form of the African Resistance Movement and Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) provides continuity between the war against fascism and the armed struggle against apartheid.

## OPSOMMING

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Hierdie proefskrif ondersoek die verband tussen militêre diens en politieke aktivisme. Die lewens van 153 politiek-blootgestelde veterane uit die Tweede Wêreldoorlog word ondersoek. Die gebruik van Pierre Bourdieu se konsepte 'Kapital' en 'Habitus' bied 'n manier aan om te onderskei tussen hoe die oorlog die politieke sieninge van die dienspligtige gevorm het en hoe die veterane hul oorlogdeelname gebruik het om hul politieke loopbane na die oorlog te bevorder.

Die ondersoek van onderskeie lyne van klas en kultuur in die blanke Suid-Afrika voor die oorlog, bied insig in die aanvanklike habitat en motivering van die vrywilliger. Oorlogdeelname het vrywilligers van alle dele van Suid-Afrika en vlakke van die blanke samelewing bymekaar gebring. Dit het hulle 'n gemeenskaplike gebied gegee om hulle tot 'n gedeelde 'Suid-Afrikanisme' te bind. Hierdie kameraadskap het hul mobilisering teen die Nasionale Party (NP) na 1948 vergemaklik.

Die voormalige soldate, wat teen die Duitsers en Italianers op verskeie fronte geveg het, was aan die gevare van totalitarisme blootgestel en 'n onverdraagsaamheid van outoritarisme in die na-oorlogse Suid-Afrika het ontwikkel. Na die oorlog het die Springbok-legioen (SL) as 'n oproep teen die toenemende rasse-onverdraagsaamheid in Suid-Afrika opgetree. Die meer gegoede veterane, dikwels in ooreenstemming met die familietradisie, het by die gevestigde Verenigde Party (UP) aangesluit. Die breë onverwagte nederlaag van die UP in 1948 deur die NP het die ou-soldate se massa toegang tot die politiek veroorsaak.

Na die NP-oorwinning in 1948, het 'n groepering van verpolitiseerde ou-soldate die NP se oorlogstyd-toenadering met fascisme gebruik, om die ou-soldate in die Fakkellkommando te mobiliseer. Die Fakkellkommando het ou-soldate in die parlementêre politiek en die buite-parlementêre politiek teen die NP in die 1953-verkiesing saamgevoeg. Die UP se nederlaag in die 1953-verkiesing het egter vinnig die onderskeie lyne onder die ou-soldate in die parlementêre politiek blootgelê. Die inplof van die Fakkellkommando het tot die ontstaan van die Unie Federale Party en die Liberale Party na die 1953-verkiesing gelei. Die einde van die voormalige militêre identiteit, as 'n samehangende politieke identiteit, het die verskeidenheid politieke sienings binne die ou-soldaat identiteit aan die lig gebring. Die spanning tussen die konserwatiewe en progressiewe oud-dienspligtiges in die UP het gelei tot die stigting van die Progressiewe Party in 1959.

Laastens het die verhoogde regeringsonderdrukking van die radikale ou-soldate tot hul aanhouding in 1956 en 1960 gelei. Die daaropvolgende betrokkenheid van hierdie oud-dienspligtiges by die vorming van gewapende formasies, in die vorm van die African Resistance Movement (ARM) en Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), bied kontinuïteit tussen die oorlog teen fascisme en die gewapende stryd teen Apartheid.

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

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ACF	Active Citizen Force
AFC	Air Force Cross
AES	Army Education Scheme
ANC	African National Congress
ANCYL	African National Congress Youth League
ARM	African Resistance Movement (See NCL/ARM)
BEF	British Expeditionary Force
BEM	British Empire Medal
BESL	British Empire Services League
CB	Companion of the Order of the Bath
CBE	Commander of the Order of the British Empire
CMG	Companion of the Order of Saint Michael and Saint George
CGS	Chief of General Staff
COD	Congress of Democrats
COP	Congress of the People
CPSA	Communist Party of South Africa
DCM	Distinguished Conduct Medal
DFC	Distinguished Flying Cross
DFM	Distinguished Flying Medal
DGMS	Director General Medical Services
DGTS	Director General Technical Services
DMI	Director Military Intelligence
DOD	Department of Defence
DSC	Distinguished Service Cross
DSO	Distinguished Service Order
GCB	Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath
HNP	Herenigde Nasionale Party/ Reunified National Party (see PNP and NP)
JHSB	Jeppe High School for Boys
KCB	Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath
KBE	Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire

KES	King Edward VII School
LP	Labour Party (not to be confused with the Liberal Party (LPSA))
LPSA	Liberal Party of South Africa
MBE	Member of the Order of the British Empire
MC	Military Cross
MID	mention in dispatches
MK	Umkhonto we Sizwe
MM	Military Medal
MOTHS	Memorable Order of the Tin Hats
MP	Member of Parliament
NCL/ARM	National Committee for Liberation/ African Resistance Movement
NCO	Non-Commissioned Officer
NEC	National Executive Committee
NP	National Party (see PNP and HNP)
NUSAS	National Union of South African Students
OB	Ossewabrandwag (Ox-wagon Sentinel)
OBE	Officer of the Order of the British Empire
PBHS	Pretoria Boys' High School
PF	Permanent Force
Phobian	PBHS Old Boy
PNP	Purified National Party (See NP and HNP)
POW	prisoner of war
PP	Progressive Party
QMG	Quartermaster General
RAF	Royal Air Force
RNVR(SA)	Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve (South Africa Division)
SAAF	South African Air Force
SACOD	South African Congress of Democrats
SACP	South African Communist Party
SACS	South Africa College School
SADF	South African Defence Force
SANDF	South African National Defence Force
SAIC	South African Indian Congress

SAIRR	South African Institute for Race Relations
SALA	South African Liberal Association
SAMC	South African Medical Corps
SANF	South African Naval Force
SAWAAF	South African Women's Auxiliary Air Force
SDF	Seaward Defence Force
SRC	Student Representative Council
SL	Springbok Legion (see The Legion)
The Front	United Democratic Front (See also UDF)
The Legion	Springbok Legion (see SL)
The Torch	Torch Commando (see WVAC)
UDF	Union Defence Force
UFP	Union Federal Party
UNISA	University of South Africa
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UP	United Party
VC	Victoria Cross
WAAF	South African Women's Auxiliary Air Force (see SAWAAF)
WIO	Welfare and Information Officer
Wits	University of Witwatersrand
WVAC	War Veterans' Action Committee (see Torch Commando)
1 SA Div	1 South African Division
2 SA Div	2 South African Division
6 SA Armd Div	6 South African Armoured Division
1 SA Bde	1 South African Brigade
5 SA Bde	5 South African Brigade

## INTRODUCTION

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### 1. BACKGROUND

War, like other times of human disaster, strips away at the veneer of society and exposes societal fault lines. Suppressed inequalities are brought into stark relief and demand resolution.<sup>1</sup> On a global scale, the Second World War was no different. The physical defeat of the authoritarian regimes in Berlin and Rome weakened European world domination, exposed the dangers of unfettered nationalism and anti-Semitism, and allowed for the strengthening of liberalism. The post-war creation of the United Nations seemed to usher in a more inclusive world order.<sup>2</sup> World wide, returning soldiers further strengthened the tide of political reform by calling for broad social reforms and more representative governance.<sup>3</sup> However, South African ex-servicemen seemed immune to the war's liberalising effects. The ex-servicemen seemed to have remained aloof when the electorate set South Africa on a different political trajectory at the first post-war election in 1948.<sup>4</sup> Part of the ex-serviceman's failure to stem the tide of exclusive Afrikaner nationalism lies in the contested nature of South Africa's involvement in the war.

From the very beginning, South Africa's involvement in the war had divided public opinion.<sup>5</sup> The very decision to fight had spilt the cabinet and left the country divided. The parliamentary debate and vote to enter the war had brought Prime Minister Barry Hertzog's resignation. The Purified National Party (PNP), which represented a large sector of the Afrikaans-speaking community who still nursed historical grievances against the British Empire vocalised opposition to South Africa's entering the war. In contrast, the English-speaking community, loyal to the idea of the British Empire, had already accepted the inevitability of fighting for Britain. There was no consultation with the Black communities.<sup>6</sup>

The conflicting attitudes in the White community shaped South Africa's contribution to the war. The new Prime Minister, Jan Smuts, restricted the recruitment of White soldiers to volunteers only.<sup>7</sup> The soldiers had to volunteer to fight in Africa, and then again to fight in Europe.<sup>8</sup> This volunteer army

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<sup>1</sup> J Fennell, *Fighting the People's War. The British and Commonwealth Armies and the Second World War* [ebook, pages 1744] (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 1126.

<sup>2</sup> DW Krüger, *The making of a nation: A history of the Union of South Africa 1910-1961* (Johannesburg: MacMillan, 1978), 225, 229.

<sup>3</sup> Fennell, *Fighting the People's War*, 1129.

<sup>4</sup> Fennell, 1193.

<sup>5</sup> Fennell, 139.

<sup>6</sup> M Shain, *A Perfect Storm. Antisemitism in South Africa 1930-1948* (Jeppestown: Jonathan Ball, 2015), 233–34; Krüger, *The Making of a Nation*, 196–98; A Grundlingh, 'The King's Afrikaners? Enlistment and Ethnic Identity in the Union of South Africa's Defence Force during the Second World War 1939-45', *Journal of African History*, 40 (1999), 353.

<sup>7</sup> Fennell, *Fighting the People's War*, 166.

<sup>8</sup> Fennell, 694; Krüger, *The Making of a Nation*, 202; ND Orpen, *Victory in Italy (South African Forces World War II) (Volume V)* (Cape Town: Purnell and Sons, 1975), 4.

appealed to the loyal and to the financially desperate.<sup>9</sup> White South African soldiers fought alongside Black, Coloured, and Indian soldiers, from both South Africa and other countries, against Italian Imperialism in Africa, despite the racist beliefs harboured at home.<sup>10</sup> Fighting in Italy, alongside communist partisan fighters, exposed the soldiers to further class-based, societal inequalities.<sup>11</sup> Soldiers, freed from the racial constraints of South African society, had their outdated racial beliefs confronted, which forced them to reframe their beliefs within a new and rapidly changing world.<sup>12</sup> If the war experience did not change their world views, it surely tested them severely.

To returning soldiers, it was apparent that the war was not changing attitudes in South Africa, but was instead hardening them.<sup>13</sup> The war had allowed the leader of the recast National Party (NP), Daniel (DF) Malan, to consolidate political control of the rurally-based Afrikaans-speaking community.<sup>14</sup> In contrast, the ruling United Party (UP) had become stale and divided.<sup>15</sup> Distracted by conducting the war, the UP became increasingly dependent on capitalist funding and the goodwill of volunteers to run the party.<sup>16</sup>

Expectations for post-war South Africa reflected these fault lines in South African politics. Liberals, buoyed by the global shift away from authoritarian governance in a liberal direction, saw a similar liberal trend evolving in South Africa. They cited the wartime reforms of Jan Hofmeyr, as well as Jan Smuts's realisation that 'segregation has fallen on evil times', as evidence of this. The hope that the war experience had reconciled the White community and the emergence of a leftist movement among the soldiers further emboldened liberals to believe that the war had acted as an accelerant for a new 'holistic' South Africa.<sup>17</sup> Leftist radicals also made positive advances during the war. The multi-racial Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) received a semblance of respectability by the

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<sup>9</sup> Grundlingh, 'The King's Afrikaners?', 360–61.

<sup>10</sup> Krüger, *The Making of a Nation*, 208; L Lovell, *For the Love of Justice* (South Africa: Jewish Publications, 2009), 109.

<sup>11</sup> A Kirkaldy, 'Very Ordinary Communists: The Life of Ivan and Lesley Schermbrucker', *South African Historical Journal*, 69, no. 3 (2017), 429; L Carneson, *Red in the Rainbow: The life and times of Fred and Sarah Carneson* (Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2010), 91; T Lodge, 'Secret Party: South African Communists between 1950 and 1960', *South African Historical Journal*, 67, no. 4 (2015), 441; L Bernstein, *Memory Against Forgetting: Memoir of a Time in South African Politics* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 1999), 100.

<sup>12</sup> Fennell, *Fighting the People's War*, 1185–86.

<sup>13</sup> Shain, *A Perfect Storm*, 264; Lovell, *For the Love of Justice*, 120.

<sup>14</sup> Shain, *A Perfect Storm*, 274.

<sup>15</sup> Krüger, *The Making of a Nation*, 228; F Oosthuizen, 'The Demobilisation of the White Union Defence Force Soldiers During and After the Second World War' (Master's Dissertation, Rand Afrikaans University, 1993), 132–133; University of the Witwatersrand-Historical Papers Research Archive (hereafter Wits Historical Papers), A2242 Hackland, 'Interview with Vause Raw by B Hackland', 3.

<sup>16</sup> WB White, 'The South African Parliamentary Opposition, 1948–1953' (PhD Thesis, University of Natal, 1989), 8–12.

<sup>17</sup> JN Lazerson, *Against the Tide: Whites in the Struggle Against Apartheid* (Bellville: Mayinuye Books, 1994), 54; J Hyslop, "'Segregation Has Fallen on Evil Days": Smuts' South Africa, Global War, and Transnational Politics, 1939–1946', *Journal of Global History*, 7, no. 3 (2012), 439; S Dubow, 'Uncovering the Historic Strands of Egalitarian Liberalism in South Africa', *Theoria*, 61, no. 140 (2014), 14; D Everatt, *The Origins of Non-Racialism: White opposition to apartheid in the 1950s* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2009), 38–39, 133.



Allied states' association with Russia and even garnered increased electoral support from White South Africans.<sup>18</sup> Coupled with the Marxist ideology, they believed that they marched with history. The physical defeat of Nazism and Fascism in the war surely was the death knell for organisations with Nazi-like associations.

However, the war and the defeat of Adolf Hitler had not exorcised authoritarian ideologies from South African soil but had rather grafted some of their ideas onto the stem of Afrikaner nationalism.<sup>19</sup> The declaration of war that had unified the English-speaking community behind Smuts had left the Afrikaner community divided.<sup>20</sup> Capitalising on the disarray within the Afrikaner community, DF Malan provided the NP with steady leadership and direction, and he positioned himself as the *Volksleier* (Political/Cultural Leader).<sup>21</sup> Assisted by François (FC) Erasmus, the NP Party organiser, he used the war period to consolidate the Nationalist hold over Afrikaners in the rural areas.<sup>22</sup> In the urban areas, Afrikaans and Black workers filled the vacuum brought by the exodus of English-speaking mineworkers, who had left to enlist with the departing regiments. The NP exploited the influx of Afrikaners to the Rand to gain a foothold in the White mineworkers' unions.<sup>23</sup> Parallel to these efforts, the emergence of the often-violent *Ossewabrandwag* (OB) (Ox-wagon Sentinel) and other 'shirtist' movements (styled on the Nazi movement) met any home front liberal or anti-Afrikaner-Nationalist tendencies with intimidation and force.<sup>24</sup> After the war, DF Malan confidently depended on the support of a significant portion of the Afrikaans community, which outnumbered the English and Jewish communities.

Returning ex-servicemen entered the political arena from two perspectives. Those with previous formal political experience simply returned to their positions in the UP. They either treated the war as a hiatus from politics or an affirmation of their family affiliation with the UP. In extreme cases, they even assumed their fathers' seats in Parliament and the party.<sup>25</sup> These politicians returned from the war buoyed by overt military accolades and the loyalty bequeathed from combat comradeship.<sup>26</sup> Others experienced the war from the ranks and, politicised by participation in the Springbok Legion (SL),

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<sup>18</sup> Everatt, *The Origins of Non-Racialism*, 11.

<sup>19</sup> Shain, *A Perfect Storm*, 37; PJ Furlong, *Between Crown and Swastika: The Impact of the Radical Right on the Afrikaner Nationalist Movement in the Facist Era* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, Johannesburg, 1991), 14.

<sup>20</sup> J Lambert, 'An Identity Threatened: White English-Speaking South Africans, Britishness and Dominion South Africanism, 1934–1939', *Kleio*, 37, no. 1 (2005), 67.

<sup>21</sup> Shain, *A Perfect Storm*, 274.

<sup>22</sup> White, 'The South African Parliamentary Opposition, 1948-1953', 12.

<sup>23</sup> TRH Davenport, *South Africa: A Modern History*, 4th ed. (London: MacMillan, 1991), 322; H Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: Biography of a People* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2003), 427–28.

<sup>24</sup> Furlong, *Between Crown and Swastika*, 143–45.

<sup>25</sup> Graaff, *Div Looks Back* (Cape Town: Human & Rousseau, 1993), 118; Wits Historical Papers, A2242 Hackland, 'Interview with Dr Jan Steytler by B Hackland'; FA Mouton, 'A Decent Man, But Not Very Popular': JGN Strauss, the United Party and the Founding of the Apartheid State, 1950-1956', *Journal for Contemporary History*, 38, no. 2 (2013), 2-4.

<sup>26</sup> Graaff, *Div Looks Back*, 141.

were determined to build on wartime activism.<sup>27</sup> The SL, formed during the war *inter alia* to protect soldiers' interests during demobilisation, was retooled as a vehicle for more comprehensive social justice. The SL was virulently anti-fascist and after the war refused to forget or forgive the Nationalists' flirtation with Nazism.<sup>28</sup>

Wartime animosity that had developed between soldiers and the rising Afrikaner Nationalist movements, who had often imitated the ideals of Nazism, persisted after the war. During the war, the tension between servicemen and the Afrikaner nationalists often split out onto the streets, with returning Afrikaans soldiers most targeted for abuse.<sup>29</sup> The animosity continued after the war. The SL disrupted Nationalist rallies in Johannesburg in 1945 and 1946.<sup>30</sup> During by-elections, ex-servicemen were called upon to protect UP and Labour Party (LP) candidates from Nationalist interference.<sup>31</sup> The UP, although willing to call on the ex-servicemen for electioneering, was wary that their absorption into the UP would disrupt the status quo within the party. Instead, the UP leadership incorrectly believed the latent wartime association of the ex-servicemen with the UP would be sufficient to pull them through the 1948 general election.<sup>32</sup>

South African historians tend to identify the NP victory in the 1948 elections as a turning point in South African history, diverting the country away from the global trend of liberalism, and towards a racist dystopia.<sup>33</sup> Although a litany of poor decisions by Smuts led to the 1948 defeat,<sup>34</sup> a lingering belief remains that the ex-servicemen had deserted Smuts in his 'finest hour'.<sup>35</sup> Historians are divided on the role and significance of the ex-serviceman's vote in the 1948 elections. Rodney Davenport describes the "restlessness of ex-soldiers" and "irritations of war-time controls over food distributions", as possible "pin-pricks" that pushed the electorate towards the NP.<sup>36</sup> Ex-servicemen, stripped of military status, "joined the ranks of the politically disaffected".<sup>37</sup> Jonathan Fennell is more adamant, arguing that "the conditions for institutionalised apartheid in South Africa had been

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<sup>27</sup> South African History Archive (hereafter SAHA), AL2460, 'Interview with F Carneson by J Fredrickse'; SAHA, AL2640, 'Interview with Wolfie Kodesh by J Fredrikse'.

<sup>28</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A617, Springbok Legion, 'Statement of Policy with Regard to the Forthcoming General Election'.

<sup>29</sup> Krüger, *The Making of a Nation*, 211; Grundlingh, 'The King's Afrikaners?', 362.

<sup>30</sup> UWC-Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, RF/6/5, Pinnock Interviews, 'Interview with Brian Bunting by Don Pinnock', <http://www.ruthfirstpapers.org.uk/>; J Slovo, *Slovo: The Unfinished Autobiography* (South Africa: Raven Press, 1995).

<sup>31</sup> Graaff, *Div Looks Back*, 125; White, 'The South African Parliamentary Opposition, 1948-1953'; WB White, 'The Role of the Springbok Legion in the Communist Party of South Africa's Common Front Strategy, 1941-1950', *Kleio* XXV (1993), 99; Wits Historical Papers, A2077, Kane-Berman, 'The Torch Commando. Its Beginning and End'.

<sup>32</sup> Oosthuizen, 'The Demobilisation of the White Union Defence Force Soldiers During and After the Second World War', 130.

<sup>33</sup> NL Waddy, 'Certain Destiny: The Presentist Obsession with 'Apartheid' in South African History', *Historia*, 49, no. 2 (November, 2004), 60.

<sup>34</sup> Furlong, *Between Crown and Swastika*, 237-38.

<sup>35</sup> Fennell, *Fighting the People's War*, 1193.

<sup>36</sup> Davenport, *South Africa: A Modern History*, 320-21.

<sup>37</sup> Krüger, *The Making of a Nation*, 234.

substantially shaped by the experience in the war”.<sup>38</sup> The war had revealed the latent racism of the White South African soldiers, who would now seek ‘extreme solutions to the colour problem’. For Fennell, it ‘seems reasonable’ that the anti-Black, anti-capitalist agenda of the NP had attracted the ex-serviceman vote in 1948.<sup>39</sup> However, François Oosthuizen and Neil Roos believe that the Nationalists’ flirtation with Nazism hindered its ability to access an ex-servicemen support base.<sup>40</sup>

The 1948 elections exposed Smuts’s Achilles heel. Despite all his international accolades, he acted poorly as a domestic politician. Notwithstanding various warnings of a looming defeat at the polls,<sup>41</sup> he failed to use his power of incumbency to weigh the elections in his favour at the demarcation commissions. Furthermore, he ‘grabbed defeat from the jaws of victory’ by snubbing Nicolaas (Klasie) Havenga, the leader of the Afrikaner Party and a Hertzog disciple. DF Malan thereby secured the wafer-thin parliamentary majority he needed to consolidate his hold on power. Despite only winning the minority of the popular vote, the NP, with the Afrikaner Party support, gained the majority of seats in Parliament.<sup>42</sup>

If the ex-servicemen had voted for the NP in 1948, their support was fleeting, and no ex-serviceman bloc within the NP emerged. Instead, once the implications of the Nationalists’ electoral victory became apparent, ex-servicemen worked to counter the NP. The NP’s opponents did not wait long to lobby ex-servicemen for support.<sup>43</sup> After 1948, ex-servicemen, as political actors in their own right, entered the South African political landscape in opposition to the Nationalists.

The emergence of a politicised veteran community provided an outlet for unresolved wartime issues. The veterans portrayed the NP’s denial of the franchise to people of colour, and other oppressive legislation, as an attack on the constitution, something they had fought to uphold. When juxtaposed against similar Nazi machinations in pre-war Europe, the NP appeared to be a post-war extension of European fascism.<sup>44</sup> Constitutionalism and anti-fascism fuelled the ex-servicemen entry into the political arena.

In 1951, ex-servicemen in the SL and the UP collaborated to consolidate the veteran community’s concerns into one movement. This was the Torch Commando, also simply known as the Torch. As a mass movement, the Torch appealed to wartime camaraderie and the soldiers’ sense of duty in order to further constitutionalism in South Africa. The Torch thereby bound itself to act constitutionally

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<sup>38</sup> Fennell, *Fighting the People’s War*, 1193.

<sup>39</sup> Fennell, *Fighting the People’s War*, 1193.

<sup>40</sup> Oosthuizen, ‘The Demobilisation of the White Union Defence Force Soldiers During and After the Second World War’, 133; N Roos, *Ordinary Springboks White Servicemen and Social Justice in South Africa, 1939-1961* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 123.

<sup>41</sup> Krüger, *The Making of a Nation*, 235.

<sup>42</sup> Furlong, *Between Crown and Swastika*, 237–38.

<sup>43</sup> White, ‘The South African Parliamentary Opposition, 1948-1953’, 260–63.

<sup>44</sup> Roos, *Ordinary Springboks*, 140–42; M Fridjhon, ‘The Torch Command & The Politics of White Opposition’, *African Studies Seminar Paper* (1976), 3; Everatt, *The Origins of Non-Racialism*, 38.

but without the discipline and organisation of a political party. Thus, to leverage its popular support, the Torch would have to cooperate with established political parties.<sup>45</sup>

Despite playing an active role in the creation of the Torch, neither the SL nor the UP was able to stamp their authority on the movement. Legionaries who had played a pivotal role in organising the Torch's inaugural march to Parliament, known as the Steel Commando, were soon jettisoned to prevent accusations of communism from tainting the movement.<sup>46</sup> These legionnaires, cut adrift from formal white politics, soon positioned themselves as the white component of the Congress Movement. After their involvement in the framing of the Freedom Charter, the NP government initiated the Treason Trial and a barrage of banning orders to neutralise their influence.<sup>47</sup>

The UP attempted to ensure Torch compliance by inserting pliable people into the organisation, providing funding for the Torch and aggressively lobbying its leadership.<sup>48</sup> Key Torch leaders, who eschewed such influences, continued to pursue independent agendas.<sup>49</sup> Although the Torch, the UP and the LP agreed to fight the 1953 elections in a United Democratic Front (UDF or the Front), tensions soon arose around the direction the front should take.<sup>50</sup> Instead of being controlled by the UP, the Torch, founded on idealistic views, would become a catalyst to worsen internal divisions within the UP.

The UP still smarting from electoral defeat in 1948 was dealt with a series of reverses in quick succession. The death of Hofmeyr, Smuts's heir apparent and Smuts himself, shortly afterwards, left the party depleted of leadership.<sup>51</sup> A muted leadership contest left Kosie (JGN) Strauss reluctantly leading a party divided between liberals and conservatives.<sup>52</sup> Conservatives, such as maverick politician Arthur Barlow and his son-in-law, ex-serviceman Frank Waring, pushed for the party to move closer to the Nationalists.<sup>53</sup> In turn, the liberal faction, emboldened by the left-leaning Torch, began to agitate for reform from within the UP. However, ex-servicemen in the Torch soon realised that UP divisions were irreconcilable.<sup>54</sup>

Despite being in partnership with the UP, where the UP would provide political direction and the Torch mass support, the leadership of the Torch persisted in charting an independent political course.<sup>55</sup> Fresh from agreeing to a common front with the UP in 1952, the secretary of the Torch,

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<sup>45</sup> Roos, *Ordinary Springboks*, 135; Fridjhon, 'The Torch Command & The Politics of White Opposition', 3.

<sup>46</sup> White, 'The South African Parliamentary Opposition, 1948-1953', 267-68.

<sup>47</sup> Roos, *Ordinary Springboks*, 172.

<sup>48</sup> Everatt, *The Origins of Non-Racialism*, 39.

<sup>49</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2077, Kane-Berman, 'The Torch Commando. Its Beginning and End'

<sup>50</sup> White, 'The South African Parliamentary Opposition, 1948-1953', 312.

<sup>51</sup> Krüger, *The Making of a Nation*, 242-43.

<sup>52</sup> Mouton, 'A Decent Man, But Not Very Popular', 4-6.

<sup>53</sup> Mouton, 12.

<sup>54</sup> Everatt, *The Origins of Non-Racialism*, 132-33; Wits Historical Papers, A2521 aa, David Everatt Papers, 'Memoirs Len Lee-Warden'; Wits Historical Papers, A2077, Kane-Berman, 'The Torch Commando. Its Beginning and End'.

<sup>55</sup> White, 'The South African Parliamentary Opposition, 1948-1953', 328.

Louis Kane-Berman announced the possibility of the Torch holding mass protests if the NP acted unconstitutionally in the matter of the Coloured Franchise.<sup>56</sup> His veiled threat of 'something in reserve', further fed the government's paranoia of a Torch-led coup de état.<sup>57</sup> Arguments between the Natalian Torch and UP over possible federalism also surfaced.<sup>58</sup> Overtures to merge the UP and the Torch made later that year, contributed to worsening relations, as it included an attempt to unseat Kane-Berman from the Torch.<sup>59</sup> Progressively more repressive measures from the NP elicited principled responses from the Torch leadership that pushed it further and further away from the UP's political pragmatic positions. Sensitive to contain developments on the radical left, the liberally-minded Torch leadership found it increasingly difficult to reconcile the diverging political agendas.<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, the NP was quick to exploit the internal inconsistencies within the 'broad church' approach of the Torch. Immediately the NP used the time-tested conspiratorial accusations of the Torch being both 'communist', and 'capitalist'. Behind the propaganda barrage, there remained a fear in the NP that, as ex-servicemen, the Torch would attempt to unseat the government violently.<sup>61</sup> The NP remained wary of the Torch until its disbanding after the 1953 elections.

Despite presenting a unified front to the electorate, as the 1953 elections drew closer, it became clear that the Torch was not able to sustain itself as a mass movement. At odds with the UP and unwilling to becoming a political party itself, the Torch chose to disband.<sup>62</sup> The disbanding of the Torch ended the politicisation of the veteran identity in South African politics. However, the collapse of the Torch did not mark the withdrawal of ex-servicemen from politics. Instead, with veteran identity removed from the table, ex-servicemen pursued their political activism within the framework of political parties. Those that had been alienated by the UP's vacillations and machinations founded two political parties, the Union Federal Party (UFP) and the non-racial Liberal Party (LPSA).<sup>63</sup>

The UP was happy to be rid of some of its more liberal tendencies and reorganised under the leadership of Sir De Villiers Graaff.<sup>64</sup> As a former prisoner of war (POW), he soon drew loyal ex-servicemen around himself.<sup>65</sup> Many of them had either served with him or in senior positions in the

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<sup>56</sup> White, 'The South African Parliamentary Opposition, 1948-1953', 314; J Kane-Berman, 'The Rise and Fall of the Torch Commando', *Politicsweb*, (2018). Available: <https://www.politicsweb.co.za/opinion/the-rise-and-fall-of-the-torch-commando>. [Accessed: 15 September 2020].

<sup>57</sup> L Jooste, 'FC Erasmus as Minister van Verdediging, 1948- 1959' (Masters Dissertation, University of South Africa, 1995), 23.

<sup>58</sup> BL Reid, 'The Federal Party, 1953-1962: An English-Speaking Reaction to Afrikaner Nationalism' (PhD Thesis, University of Natal, 1979), 15.

<sup>59</sup> White, 'The South African Parliamentary Opposition, 1948-1953', 328; WB White, 'The United Party and the 1953 General Election', *Historia* 36, no. 2 (1991), 75.

<sup>60</sup> Reid, 'The Federal Party, 1953-1962', 22, 36.

<sup>61</sup> Jooste, 'FC Erasmus as Minister van Verdediging, 1948-1959', 23.

<sup>62</sup> Fridjhon, 'The Torch Command & The Politics of White Opposition', 12.

<sup>63</sup> Fridjhon, 'The Torch Command & The Politics of White Opposition', 12; Davenport, *South Africa: A Modern History*, 331.

<sup>64</sup> Graaff, *Div Looks Back*, 144.

<sup>65</sup> AJ McConnachie, 'The 1961 General Election in the Republic of South Africa' (Masters Dissertation, University of South Africa, 1999), 32.



Union Defence Force (UDF). The war veterans caucus was strengthened by soldiers who left the UDF in protest against Erasmus' reforms as Minister of Defence.<sup>66</sup> Furthermore, Graaff moved to make the UP more acceptable to the '*backveld*' or rural constituencies. He recruited conservative candidates to stand in these constituencies in the 1958 elections. However, his attempts to win over the nationalist support base failed and further alienated the remaining liberals and progressive members of the party, many of them ex-servicemen. Matters came to a head at the 1959 UP conference in Bloemfontein, where 12 members of Parliament and others left the party to establish the Progressive Party (PP).<sup>67</sup> Significantly, the Progressives secured the support of Harry Oppenheimer, which would mean the eventual end to an essential source for UP funding.<sup>68</sup>

By 1960 it was evident that veteran status and its inherent social capital had lost its currency. The veteran community no longer had sufficient cohesiveness to act as a pressure group. Ex-servicemen, dispersed across the political spectrum, and no longer bound by a collective identity, now relied on wartime loyalties within established political formations. However, the NP government's enthusiastic response to events in Sharpeville concentrated on a significant number of ex-servicemen, who had been politicised by the war, in prison together. Their incarceration reignited previous martial ideals, planting the seeds for future armed resistance.<sup>69</sup>

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Roos, of the University of the Free State, historians have given little attention to the relationship between military service in the Second World War and post-war political activism in South Africa.<sup>70</sup> However, the involvement of ex-servicemen in post-war politics re-emerges in the literature when the focus is placed on the formative years of the anti-apartheid struggle, when ex-servicemen played an instrumental role in both MK<sup>71</sup> and the African Resistance Movement (ARM).<sup>72</sup> However, their immediate post-war political participation is overwhelmed by the louder discourses of the radical, liberal and nationalist historiographies.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> RS Boulter, 'FC Erasmus and the Politics of South African Defence 1948-1959' (DPhil Thesis, Rhodes University, 1997), 58.

<sup>67</sup> McConnachie, 'The 1961 General Election in the Republic of South Africa', 130–31.

<sup>68</sup> C Eglin, *Crossing the Borders of Power* (Cape Town: Jonathan Ball, 2007), 61.

<sup>69</sup> Roos, *Ordinary Springboks*, 172–74.

<sup>70</sup> Roos, 2.

<sup>71</sup> T Simpson, *Umkhonto WeSizwe* (Cape Town: Penguin Books, 2016); J Cherry, *Umkhonto WeSizwe* (Johannesburg: Jacana Media, 2011).

<sup>72</sup> M Gunther, 'The National Committee of Liberation (NCL)/ African Resistance Movement (ARM)', in South African Democracy Education Trust (SADET), *The Road to Democracy in South Africa Volume 1 [1960-1970]* (Pretoria: UNISA Press, 2010); A du Toit, 'The National Committee for Liberation ('ARM') 1960-1964: Sabotage and the Question of the Ideological Subject' (MA Thesis, University of Cape Town, 1990).

<sup>73</sup> See A Seegers, *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa* (New York: Tauris Academic Studies 1996); Grundlingh, 'The King's Afrikaners?', 351-365.

Historians, including Karen Horn, Surya Chetty, Albert Grundlingh and Roos, have identified the paucity of South African history writing on the Second World War.<sup>74</sup> The advent of apartheid shortly after the war, discouraged historical inquiry partially because “it [stood] as a counterfactual moment to the rise of Afrikaner nationalism”.<sup>75</sup> Several writers, including John Lambert, Ian van der Waag and David Katz, observe that the historiography of South Africa’s involvement in the war languished in the doldrums during NP rule.<sup>76</sup> Roos and Roger Boulter continued this reasoning by noting that the disinterest extended to the influence of wartime experiences on post-war politics.<sup>77</sup> Roos further suggests that post-war government oppression made key proponents reluctant to both keep records of their activities or openly share their views. This reluctance is evident in the lack of consolidated primary source material on the Torch and SL.<sup>78</sup>

Nicholas Waddy, an American historian, provides another compelling explanation for the broken continuity between the war to post-war history in South African history writing. The seeming obsession of South African historians with apartheid has framed the 1948 elections as a “watershed” in South African history. Waddy believes that interest in pre-1948 history rarely extends beyond framing it as an era of preparation for apartheid. This tendency has also led to standard interpretations of South African History as a particular type of race conflict, blinding historians to other just as “real” historical threads, such as intra-white tensions. According to Waddy, it means “the essential continuities between the pre- and post-1948 periods are frequently overlooked”.<sup>79</sup>

Van der Waag and Deon Visser point out that much of the post-1948 military history writing, done by Afrikaner nationalist historians,

focussed on the political history of the glorious march of Afrikaner nationalism toward the creation of ‘South African’ structures and eventually the advent of the republic in 1961 ... [and that] ... [i]t

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<sup>74</sup> K Horn, ‘Researching South African Prisoners-of-War Experience During World War II : Historiography, Archives and Oral Testimony’, *Journal for Contemporary History*, 39, no. 2 (2014), 83; S Chetty, ‘Gender Under Fire: Interrogating War in South Africa, 1939-1945’ (Masters Dissertation, University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2001), ix; Grundlingh, ‘The King’s Afrikaners?’, 351; N Roos, ‘Education, Sex and Leisure: Ideology, Discipline and the Construction of Race Among South African Servicemen During the Second World War’, *Journal of Social History* 44, no. 3 (2011), 813.

<sup>75</sup> S Walton, ‘Remembering and Recollecting World War Two: South African Perspectives’ (MA Dissertation, University of Cape Town, 2012), 5.

<sup>76</sup> J Lambert, “Their Finest Hour?” English-Speaking South Africans and World War II’, *South African Historical Journal*, 60, no. 1 (2008), 60–84; I van der Waag, ‘Contested histories: official history and the South African military in the 20<sup>th</sup> century’, in J Grey (ed.), *The Last Word? Essays on Official History in the United States and British Commonwealth* (Westport, Connecticut and London: Praeger, 2003), 27–52; D Katz, ‘A Case of Arrested Development: The Historiography Relating to South Africa’s Participation in the Second World War’, *Scientia Militaria*, 40, no. 3 (2013), 280–317. See also D Fourie, ‘Review: A Military History of Modern South Africa’, *Scientia Militaria*, 43, no. 2 (2015), 199–203.

<sup>77</sup> Roos, *Ordinary Springboks*, 2; Boulter, ‘FC Erasmus and the Politics of South African Defence 1948–1959’, 3.

<sup>78</sup> Roos, *Ordinary Springboks*, 200.

<sup>79</sup> Waddy, ‘Certain Destiny : The Presentist Obsession with ‘Apartheid’ in South African History’, 61–64.

was sufficient for nationalist scholars to note simply that 1948 allowed a triumphant nationalist party to reshape the UDF into a supposedly more “South African” force...<sup>80</sup>

Van der Waag points out that in South Africa there has been tendency to cast war and military history in a supporting role to the dominant discourse of Afrikaner nationalism or the anti-apartheid struggle, which is even present in Anglo-Boer War historiography.<sup>81</sup>

The dominant Republican, nationalist narrative, where the declaration of the Republic in 1961 formalised the South African identity, has de-emphasised the turbulent period between the war and Republic. The domination of the competing narratives of race conflict and of the ‘March of Afrikaner Nationalism’ silenced the ex-servicemen’s political activism in this period. The disconnect in South African history writing provides some explanation for the literature gap dealing with this facet of South African history. As a result, the role of war veterans in post-war society has remained hidden, thereby leaving an important strand in South African history underappreciated. In an attempt to expose the nexus between wartime experience and post-war politics, the next section reviews both Second World War material and post-war material.

## 2.1 Official and semi-official histories

The National Party government influenced the writing of the official and semi-official histories. The historians of the Union War History section produced a number of narratives during and after the war. Three volumes appeared under the editorship of John Agar-Hamilton. However, the Union War History section was closed prematurely in 1962 – they worked on narratives disagreeable to the government of the day – leaving Colonel Neil Orpen, a soldier rather than an historian, to dominate the history writing after 1962. Orpen collaborated with poet and ex-soldier, James Ambrose Brown, and a retired general, Henry (Kalfie) Martin, to produce an eight-volume series, between 1962 and 1982, covering the South African forces participation in the war, dealing with the preparation for war, land campaigns and air campaigns. The series was published by Purnell of Cape Town. Orpen carefully bowdlerised many controversies or embarrassing incidents so as to not offend the NP government. Between 1990 and 1994, Ashanti published the last semi-official history in a 12-book series called *South Africans at War*, which included books dealing with South Africa’s participation in the Second World War. The series marked a final effort by the NP to influence the Second World War narrative. Funded by the SADF, the project had been aimed to alleviate some of the international isolation ahead of the changes the Fredrick (FW) de Klerk government was ushering in. But they fail to impress. These histories focus on the war and because of the political context, rarely extend their

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<sup>80</sup> I van der Waag and D Visser, ‘Between History, Amnesia and Selective Memory: The South African Armed Forces, a Century’s Perspective’, *Scientia Militaria*, 40, no. 3 (2013), 3.

<sup>81</sup> I van der Waag, ‘Re-Fighting the 2nd Anglo-Boer War: Historians in the Trenches’, *Scientia Militaria*, 30, no. 1 (2000), iii–iv.



analysis beyond the end of the conflict, thus providing scant insight into the nexus between war experience and post-war political activism.<sup>82</sup>

## 2.2 Regimental histories

Regimental histories, another significant contribution to the South African wartime narrative, provide some continuity between war and peace as they tend to cover the entire life span of the regiment.<sup>83</sup> Older Regiments, such as the SA Irish, the Transvaal Scottish and the Cape Town Highlanders, have several volumes. These histories, written by the soldiers themselves, can provide valuable insights into the transition of volunteer soldiers back into active citizen life.

In the post-war period the English-medium regiments, feeling threatened by the reforms of Erasmus, commissioned the writing of a wave of regimental histories.<sup>84</sup> Their primary focus was to record for posterity the regiments' and soldiers' achievements and sacrifice. Unsurprisingly, a 'drum and trumpet' style dominated. The regimental perspective from the tactical level dominated descriptions of wartime campaigning and the post-war period was an assemblage of the small minutiae of regimental matters, such as promotions, training camps and transfers.<sup>85</sup>

During the 1950s, South African regimental historians avoided discussing the post-war political environment, especially the non-military implications of the political decisions made by Erasmus. When narrating the political climate, the focus tended to be on the organisational impact of the restructuring of the UDF.<sup>86</sup> The efforts of the Minister of Defence, Erasmus, and of his protégé,

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<sup>82</sup> Van der Waag, 'Contested Histories', 27–52; Katz, 'A Case of Arrested Development', 294–298.

<sup>83</sup> HH Curson, *The History of the Kimberley Regiment* (Kimberley: Northern Cape Printers, 1963); FL Coleman, *The Kaffrarian Rifles, 1876–1986* (East London: Kaffrarian Rifles Association, 1988); H Klein, *Light Horse Cavalcade: The Imperial Light Horse 1899–1961* (Cape Town: Howard Timmins, 1969); AF Hattersley, *Carbineer. The History of the Royal Natal Carbineers* (Aldershot: Gale and Polden, 1950); R Griffiths, *First City. A Saga of Service* (Cape Town: Howard Timmins, 1970); E Goetzsche, *"Rough but Ready" An Official History of the Natal Mounted Rifles and Its Antecedent and Associated Units 1854–1969* (Durban: Natal Mounted Rifles, 1971); S Monick and OEF Baker, *Clear the Way (Faugh A Ballagh) Volume II: 1946–1990* (Johannesburg: South African Irish Regimental Association 1991); N Orpen, *Prince Alfred Guard 1856–1966* (Cape Town: Books for Africa, 1967); AJ du Plessis, *The Umvoti Mounted Rifles 1864–1975* (Pietermaritzburg: The Natal Witness, 1975); S Monick, *A Bugle Calls: The Story of the Witwatersrand Rifles and Predecessors 1899–1987* (Germiston: Witwatersrand Rifles Regimental Council, 1989); JH Mitchell, *Tartan on the Veld* (Johannesburg: The Transvaal Scottish Regimental Council, 1994); N Orpen, *The Cape Town Highlanders 1885–1970* (Cape Town: The Cape Town Highlanders History Committee, 1970).

<sup>84</sup> Van der Waag, 'Contested Histories', 39; Katz, 'A Case of Arrested Development', 284.

<sup>85</sup> Monick and Baker, *Clear the Way (Faugh A Ballagh) Volume II: 1946–1990*; Curson, *The History of the Kimberley Regiment*; Klein, *Light Horse Cavalcade*; Hattersley, *Carbineer*; Griffiths, *First City. A Saga of Service*; Goetzsche, *"Rough but Ready"*; Coleman, *The Kaffrarian Rifles, 1876–1986*; Orpen, *Prince Alfred Guard 1856–1966*; Du Plessis, *The Umvoti Mounted Rifles 1864–1975*; Monick, *A Bugle Calls*; Orpen, *The Cape Town Highlanders 1885–1970*.

<sup>86</sup> Monick and Baker, *Clear the Way*; Curson, *The History of the Kimberley Regiment*; Klein, *Light Horse Cavalcade*; Hattersley, *Carbineer*; Griffiths, *First City*; Goetzsche, *"Rough but Ready"*; Coleman, *The Kaffrarian Rifles, 1876–1986*; Orpen, *Prince Alfred Guard 1856–1966*; Du Plessis, *The Umvoti Mounted Rifles 1864–1975*; Monick, *A Bugle Calls*; Orpen, *The Cape Town Highlanders 1885–1970*.

Colonel Rudolph Hiemstra, to reorganise and control the military archives possibly deterred many narrators from being overly critical.

Later histories such as *Tartan on the Veld*<sup>87</sup> and *The Kaffrarian Rifles, 1876-1986*<sup>88</sup> broke from this trend and made direct reference to the political tension between the regiments and Erasmus. Mark Coghlan, writer of recent histories of Royal Natal Carbineers and Umvoti Mounted Rifles, unfettered by the fears of the 1950s, was even more critical of the minister. He documented the struggle of Natal's regiments to protect their English-medium identity in *Brother vs Brother: The Colonial Citizen Soldier in Natal during the Anglo-Boer War and the Implication for Later ACF Regiments in the 1950s and early 1960s*. Coghlan links the Active Citizen Force (ACF) units to post-1948 protest movements such as the Torch, the Horticulturalists, and Freedom Radio.<sup>89</sup>

Despite the various motivations for writing regimental history, and the political constraints upon the authors, this genre of history writing provides continuity between the wartime and post-war periods. Despite their 'drum and trumpet' style and the attempts to avoid political debate, their authors reveal some of the tensions between the NP Government and the regiments of the ACF. Later authors, including Coghlan, James Mitchell and Francis Coleman, explore these issues in more depth. Coghlan links Erasmus' reforms to the alienation of the ACF members and subsequent political action by ex-servicemen.

### 2.3 General works

There are several general histories on the post-war changes the Union of South Africa underwent before the declaration of the Republic. However, the majority of these sources only briefly touch on the Union's war participation, the war years and the influence of the post-war politicised veteran movements. Floris (Floors) van Jaarsveld in *Van Riebeeck tot PW Botha* refers to the Torch as a part of a United Front with the UP and LP.<sup>90</sup> Daniël Kruger links the creation of the Torch to the 'communist-inspired' SL. He however dismisses its impact stating that "notwithstanding the support it received from opposition newspapers, it had little success".<sup>91</sup> Davenport, who was an ex-serviceman and a member of the Liberal Party (LPSA), chronicles the Torch's lively rise and fall concisely and traces its influence beyond its fall in 1953 in *South Africa: A Modern History*. He shrewdly observes that "[i]t's divided spirit lived on in the UP and the emergence of two new political parties, both formed in May 1953; the Union Federal Party...and the Liberal Party..."<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Mitchell, *Tartan on the Veld*, 48–49.

<sup>88</sup> Coleman, *The Kaffrarian Rifles, 1876-1986*, 244.

<sup>89</sup> M Coghlan, 'Brother vs Brother: The Colonial Citizen Soldier in Natal during the Anglo-Boer War and the Implication for Later ACF Regiments in the 1950s and Early 1960s', *Contree*, 46 (November 1999), 149.

<sup>90</sup> FA van Jaarsveld, *Van van Riebeeck Tot PW Botha. 'n Inleiding Tot Die Geskiedenis van Die Republiek van Suid Afrika* (Johannesburg: Perskor, 1982), 304.

<sup>91</sup> Krüger, *The Making of a Nation*, 264.

<sup>92</sup> Davenport, *South Africa: A Modern History*, 329–31.

Later general histories are even less detailed regarding the role ex-servicemen and veteran organisations played in post-war politics. Herman Giliomee, in his *The Afrikaners Biography of a People*, refers to the Torch only in terms of the Coloured franchise and downplays the political implications of Erasmus' military reforms.<sup>93</sup> David Welsh, in *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid*, does not mention either the SL or the Torch.<sup>94</sup> It seems general histories overlook the ex-serviceman role in post-war politics. For this study, general histories, therefore, only contextualise the broad political landscape of the Union of South Africa.

## 2.4 Academic journals, dissertations and theses

The scant reference to the role played by ex-servicemen in post-war politics in general histories, official military histories and regimental histories suggests a focus area for study. However, a review of a variety of more specialist literature is required to consider works covering the war and the post-war periods to trace the continuity between war service and post-war political activism.

In recent decades, historians and political scientists – *inter alia* Lambert, Albert Grundlingh, Louis Grundlingh, Roos, Horn, Kevin Greenbank, Bill Nasson, Visser, Van der Waag, Timothy Stapleton and Annette Seegers – have built a collection of South African Second World War literature.<sup>95</sup> Lambert and Albert Grundlingh investigate the motivations for White men to join the war effort. Their work reveals interesting intersections between class, intra-white ethnic identity and their reasons for enlisting from September 1939.<sup>96</sup> Albert Grundlingh argues that many poor Afrikaners often joined to escape impoverishment.<sup>97</sup> He does concede that the more affluent Afrikaners may have been motivated by higher ideals.<sup>98</sup> Lambert found that the English-speaking community, possibly being more prosperous than the average Afrikaner, joined because of the righteousness of the cause and a strong affiliation to Britain.<sup>99</sup> Both Oosthuizen and Greenbank concur that, among whites, pre-war

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<sup>93</sup> Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 493, 501.

<sup>94</sup> D Welsh, *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2009).

<sup>95</sup> L Grundlingh, 'Aspects of the Impact of the Second World War on the Lives of Black South African and British Colonial Soldiers', *Transafrican Journal of History*, 21 (1992), 19–35; Grundlingh, 'The King's Afrikaners?'; K Horn, *In Enemy Hands: South Africa's POWs in World War II* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2015); K Greenbank, '“You Chaps Mustn't Worry When You Come Back”: Cape Town Soldiers and Aspects of the Experience of War and Demobilisation 1939-1953' (Master's Dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1995); Lambert, 'Their Finest Hour?'; Seegers, *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa*; I van der Waag, 'The Union Defence Force Between the Two World Wars, 1919-1940', *Scientia Militaria*, 30, no. 2 (2000), 1919–40; I van der Waag, *A Military History of Modern South Africa* (Jeppestown: Jonathan Ball, 2015); B Nasson, 'A Flying Springbok of Wartime British Skies: AG 'Sailor' Malan', *Kronos*, no. 35 (2009), 71–97; TJ Stapleton, *A Military History of South Africa, From the Dutch-Khoi Wars to the End of Apartheid* (Oxford: Praeger, 2010); Roos, *Ordinary Springboks*.

<sup>96</sup> Grundlingh, 'The King's Afrikaners?'; Lambert, 'Their Finest Hour'; J Lambert, 'An Unknown People: Reconstructing British South African Identity', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 37, no. 4 (2009), 599–617; South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *South African Jews in World War Two* (Johannesburg: South African Jewish Board of Deputies, 1950).

<sup>97</sup> Grundlingh, 'The King's Afrikaners?', 361-362.

<sup>98</sup> Grundlingh, 360.

<sup>99</sup> Lambert, 'Their Finest Hour?', 71.

social class or wealth influenced the soldiers' war experience.<sup>100</sup> Such differences in pre-war expectations may have shaped their war experiences and influenced post-war activism.

Adopting a 'war and society' approach, Nasson's Jacana pocketbook explores the influence of the war on society in a concise and accessible manner.<sup>101</sup> Works by Fankie Monama<sup>102</sup> and Chetty<sup>103</sup> investigate the propaganda efforts by the military to garner support on the home front, while other histories, such as that produced by Horn,<sup>104</sup> are more topical and concentrate on the experiences of South African prisoners of war (POWs). Stapleton, Van der Waag, and Seegers, while adopting very different approaches, fill a long-existing void in terms of overarching histories of the South African armed forces. The nature of these studies precludes coverage of any individual war experiences.<sup>105</sup>

The lived experience so often lacking in general military history is the focus of the new social history approach that emerged in the late 1970s. The approach focuses on the dynamic of power from the perspective of the 'ordinary person' or 'history from below'.<sup>106</sup> Some valuable additions to the South African historical narrative have been made by adding marginalised groups that were previously left off the stage of history. Louis Grundlingh's work on Black ex-servicemen<sup>107</sup> and Chetty's and Nancy Clark's investigations of the war from the Black and feminine perspectives,<sup>108</sup> chronicle the loosening grip of white masculine dominance caused by the war. The post-war re-emergence of white male dominance resulted in bitter disappointment for women and Blacks who were marginalised during demobilisation and eventually excluded from the military environment.

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<sup>100</sup> Oosthuizen, 'The Demobilisation of the White Union Defence Force Soldiers During and After the Second World War', 121; Greenbank, 'You Chaps Mustn't Worry When You Come Back', 18.

<sup>101</sup> B Nasson, *South Africa at War, 1939-1945 (A Jacana Pocket History)* (Johannesburg: Jacana Media, 2012).

<sup>102</sup> FL Monama, 'South African Propaganda Agencies and the Battle for Public Opinion during the Second World War, 1939–1945', *Scientia Militaria*, 44, no. 1 (2016), 145–67; FL Monama, 'Wartime Propaganda In the Union of South Africa 1939-1945' (Dissertation, Stellenbosch University, 2014).

<sup>103</sup> S Chetty, 'Imagining National Unity: South African Propaganda Efforts during the Second World War', *Kronos*, 38, no. 1 (2012), 106–30.

<sup>104</sup> Horn, *In Enemy Hands*; K Horn, 'Changing Attitudes among South African Prisoners of War towards Their Italian Captors during World War II, 1942–1943', *Scientia Militaria* 40, no. 3 (2012), 200–221.

<sup>105</sup> Stapleton, *A Military History of South Africa*; Van der Waag, *A Military History of Modern South Africa*; Seegers, *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa*.

<sup>106</sup> A Grundlingh, 'Social History and Afrikaner Historiography in a Changing South Africa: Problems and Potential', *Collected Seminar Papers. Institute of Commonwealth Studies*, 45 (1993), 1; C Kros, 'Considering the Legacy of Radical/Social History in South Africa', *African Historical Review*, 39, no. 1 (2007), 41–58; J Hyslop, 'South African Social History and the New Non-Fiction', *Safundi*, 13, no. 1–2 (2012), 59–71.

<sup>107</sup> Grundlingh, 'Aspects of the Impact of the Second World War on the Lives of Black South African and British Colonial Soldiers'.

<sup>108</sup> S Chetty, 'Our Victory Was Our Defeat: Race, Gender and Liberalism in the Union Defence Force, 1939-1945' (PhD Thesis, University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2006); Chetty, 'Gender Under Fire: Interrogating War in South Africa, 1939-1945'; NL Clark, 'Gendering Production in Wartime South Africa', *The American Historical Review*, 106, no. 4 (2019), 1181–1213.

James Bourhill,<sup>109</sup> Greenbank<sup>110</sup> and Gustav Bentz<sup>111</sup> have recast the war experience from the ordinary white soldiers' perspective. Roos goes further by using the framework of radical theory to make a unique and vital contribution. He interrogates the role and experiences of 'ordinary' White soldiers during and after the war through the lens of 'whiteness'. He uses the radical (SL) ex-servicemen's post-war political engagements to map out the fault lines of class, ethnicity and race in South African society.<sup>112</sup> The critique of his work by Alex Mouton and Lambert raises questions about the influence of the war on the broader spectrum of ex-servicemen who pursued careers as opposition politicians. Both Mouton and Lambert point out that Roos focused on ordinary soldiers and suggest that further enquiry is needed if his findings are to be generalised beyond the category of the 'ordinary' soldier or the working class.<sup>113</sup>

The observations of Lambert, Albert Grundlingh and Greenbank regarding the intersection between politics, class and ethnicity provides substance to Mouton and Lambert's critique of Roos. Lambert identifies the intersection between white-racial identity and class, and argues that the British South African identity was "male and middle class".<sup>114</sup> Fennell, using quantitative techniques, confirms that the English-speaking recruit came from the more prosperous strata of society than his Afrikaans-speaking comrade.<sup>115</sup> However, Lambert laments that being trapped in the 'middle', the middle-class White English speaking community has become the "unknown people" of South African history.<sup>116</sup> Within the South African context, Jonathan Hyslop's exposition of Perla Siedle Gibson<sup>117</sup> provides a glimpse into the history from the middle. Further cases, are to be found in the genre of autobiographies, biographies and memoirs.<sup>118</sup> Similarly, Mouton explores history from the perspective of those on the edge of power in *Iron in the Soul: The Leaders of the Official Parliamentary Opposition in South Africa, 1910–1993*. He provides a biographic overview of the opposition leaders in South Africa, of which Graaff, Colin Eglin and Radclyffe Cadman had served in the war.<sup>119</sup> According to Mouton the war had enhanced Graaff's stature which ensured some ex-

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<sup>109</sup> JF Bourhill, 'Red Tabs' Life and Death in the 6th South African Armoured Division, 1943–1945' (PhD Thesis, University of Pretoria, 2014).

<sup>110</sup> Greenbank, 'You Chaps Mustn't Worry When You Come Back'.

<sup>111</sup> G Bentz, 'In for a Hell of a Time: The Wartime Experiences of Two Ordinary South African Soldiers in the North African Desert during the Second World War', *Journal for Contemporary History*, 37, no. 2 (2012).

<sup>112</sup> Roos, *Ordinary Springboks*, 1.

<sup>113</sup> FA Mouton, 'Review of Roos, Neil, *Ordinary Springboks: White Servicemen and Social Justice in South Africa 1939–1961*', *H-SAfrica, H-Net Reviews*, 95 (2006), 2–3; Lambert, 'Their Finest Hour?', 69.

<sup>114</sup> Lambert, 'An Unknown People', 603.

<sup>115</sup> Fennell, *Fighting the People's War*, 189–90.

<sup>116</sup> Lambert, 'Their Finest Hour?', 70; Lambert, 'An Unknown People', 603.

<sup>117</sup> J Hyslop, 'The Lady in White: British Imperial Loyalism and Women's Volunteerism in Second World War Durban', *Journal of Natal and Zulu History*, 32, no. 1 (2018), 38–54.

<sup>118</sup> See Eglin, *Crossing the Borders of Power*, M. Cardo, *Opening Men's Eyes: Peter Brown and the Liberal Struggle for South Africa* (Jeppestown: Jonathan Ball, 2010); Slovo, *Slovo: The Unfinished Autobiography*; Bernstein, *Memory Against Forgetting*.

<sup>119</sup> FA Mouton, *Iron in the Soul: The Leaders of the Official Parliamentary Opposition in South Africa, 1910–1993* (Pretoria: Protea Book House, 2017).



servicemen's loyalty to him. In contrast Eglin's war experience had awoken a principled hatred for fascism and discriminatory government in him.<sup>120</sup>

South African military historians prefer to focus on military matters, often ending the narrative at the end of the war, leaving the tracing of the continuity of threads into the post-war periods to others.<sup>121</sup> For instance, Greenbank observed that it was "the upper echelons of society who were educated in Britain and seemed likely to pursue careers in government or as leaders of industry".<sup>122</sup> Oosthuizen observed that "common war-time experience by no means resulted in common political philosophy".<sup>123</sup> Similarly, Lambert concludes that despite the English-speaking community's total involvement in the war effort on both the home front and abroad, there remained a dangerous detachment from politics and insensitivity to any demands for political reform from their returning servicemen.<sup>124</sup> Horn also finds a consistent lack of effort by the ex-servicemen to become involved in politics.<sup>125</sup> Greenbank, however, felt that the war might have had a more considerable influence distilling a feeling of political disposition among younger recruits.<sup>126</sup> Fennell goes further in claiming that, instead of liberalising soldiers' political perspectives, the war had "hardened White servicemen's racial prejudices and encouraged many to seek extreme solutions to the colour problem".<sup>127</sup> He believes that it would be 'reasonable' to argue that wartime experience may even have caused ex-servicemen to have supported the NP in the 1948 elections.<sup>128</sup>

Focused study on the political history, especially that of white opposition to apartheid, seems to refute Fennell's assertions and provide a more nuanced view of the political world in which ex-servicemen had to reintegrate. Such works enable an unbroken thread to be traced from war experience, through the veteran organisations, to political activism. Randolph Vigne, in *Liberals Against Apartheid*, and Lambert, in 'Their Finest Hour: English-speaking South Africans in World War II', point out that the SL provided a voice for both communists and liberals.<sup>129</sup> Joshua Lazerson in *Against the Tide*, and Barry White in *The Role of the Springbok Legion in the Communist Party of South Africa's Common Front Strategy, 1941-1950* focus more intently on the post-war role of the

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<sup>120</sup> Mouton, *Iron in the Soul*, 89, 96-97, 130; FA Mouton, 'No Prime Minister Could Want a Better Leader of the Opposition: Sir de Villiers Graaff, the United Party and the Apartheid State, 1956-1977', *African Historical Review* 46, no. 1 (2014), 49; FA Mouton, "One of the Architects of Our Democracy": Colin Eglin, the Progressive Federal Party and the Leadership of the Official Parliamentary Opposition, 1977 - 1979 and 1986 - 1987', *Journal for Contemporary History* 40, no. 1(2015), 2

<sup>121</sup> See the handling of Corporal Christopher Dering Stainbank, in G Bentz, 'Fighting Springboks C Company, Royal Natal Carbineers: From Premier Mine to Po Valley, 1939-1945' (Master's Dissertation, Stellenbosch University, 2013).

<sup>122</sup> Greenbank, 'You Chaps Mustn't Worry When You Come Back', 18.

<sup>123</sup> F Oosthuizen, 'Soldiers and Politics: The Political Ramifications of White Union Defence Forces Soldiers' Demobilisation', *Scientia Militaria*, 24, no. 1 (1994), 24.

<sup>124</sup> Lambert, 'Their Finest Hour?', 81.

<sup>125</sup> Horn, *In Enemy Hands*, 243-4.

<sup>126</sup> Greenbank, 'You Chaps Mustn't Worry When You Come Back', 21.

<sup>127</sup> Fennell, *Fighting the People's War*, 1184.

<sup>128</sup> Fennell, 1193.

<sup>129</sup> R Vigne, *Liberals Against Apartheid* (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1997), 6; Lambert, 'Their Finest Hour?', 78.

communist ex-servicemen in the SL.<sup>130</sup> Notwithstanding the value of these sources, they oversimplify the influence of war service on political activism by treating it as membership of a veterans' association rather than systematically illustrating the various effects of war participation upon broader social interaction and community life.

Similarly, other political histories, especially those focused on the 1950s, do not investigate the nexus between war service and political views, but rather focus on the influence of ex-servicemen organisations in post-war South Africa. Opposition political discourse, when placed under academic scrutiny, reveals the influence which the veteran organisations (the SL<sup>131</sup> and the Torch) exerted on political events of the 1950s. Michael Fridjhon's paper 'The Torch Commando & The Politics of White Opposition' has become the reference point for subsequent discussions on the Torch.<sup>132</sup> White explores the symbiotic relationship between the Torch, the UP and the 'Natal Stand'. Thus, studies that focus on the opposition politics of the 1950s tend to disregard the wartime experiences that shaped the ex-servicemen's political activism.<sup>133</sup>

Interestingly, Brian Reid in 'The Federal Party, 1953-1962' reveals that the Natal Torch leadership was instrumental in the formation of the UFP.<sup>134</sup> Whereas Anne Moffat, in 'From 'Conscience Politics' to the Battlefields of Political Activism', places ex-servicemen, such as Kenneth Hill, Hans Meidner, Terence Beard, Peter Brown, Leopold (Leo) Kuper, Leopold (Leo) Marquard and Joseph (Jock) Isacowitz at the heart of the LPSA.<sup>135</sup> Similarly, David Everatt references the activism of ex-servicemen and highlights the tensions between the radical and liberal ex-servicemen in the Torch,<sup>136</sup> while Boulter speculates that the frustration of UDF officers with Erasmus translated into support for the Torch and UP when the officers eventually were pressured into resigning or retiring.<sup>137</sup> Albeit valuable, these sources do not provide a satisfactory bridge between war experiences and the post-war period.

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<sup>130</sup> Lazerson, *Against the Tide*, 53–57.

<sup>131</sup> N Roos, 'The Springbok and the Skunk: War Veterans and the Politics of Whiteness in South Africa during the 1940s and 1950s', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 35, no. 3 (2009), 643–61; Mouton, 'Review of Roos'; White, 'The Role of the Springbok Legion in the Communist Party of South Africa's Common Front Strategy, 1941-1950'; Roos, *Ordinary Springboks*.

<sup>132</sup> Fridjhon, 'The Torch Command & The Politics of White Opposition'; Wits Historical Papers, A2077, Kane-Berman, 'The Torch Commando. Its Beginning and End'.

<sup>133</sup> Reid, 'The Federal Party, 1953-1962'; ADF Moffatt, 'From 'Conscience Politics' to the Battlefields of Political Activism The Liberal Party in Natal, 1953-1968' (Master's Dissertation, University of Natal, 1999); White, 'The United Party and the 1953 General Election'; Vigne, *Liberals Against Apartheid*; Everatt, *The Origins of Non-Racialism*.

<sup>134</sup> Reid, 'The Federal Party, 1953-1962', 51.

<sup>135</sup> Moffatt, 'From 'Conscience Politics' to the Battlefields of Political Activism', 42; See also Vigne, *Liberals Against Apartheid*, 16.

<sup>136</sup> Everatt, *The Origins of Non-Racialism*, 38–39.

<sup>137</sup> Boulter, 'FC Erasmus and the Politics of South African Defence 1948-1959', 231–44.

## 2.5 International literature

A survey of international literature provides some theoretical direction in addressing the link between the Second World War and the post-war political activism of the ex-servicemen. Roos, Ernst Malherbe, and van Jaarsveld have all drawn parallels between the race relations of South Africa and the Southern states of the USA.<sup>138</sup> White US ex-servicemen developed a 'sense of responsibility to build a better world' and saw political activism as a continuation of their initial military service obligation.<sup>139</sup> The post-war political experience of Iraq War veterans seems to replicate these findings.<sup>140</sup> These findings suggest a sense of continuity in ex-serviceman behaviour and could provide insight into South African veteran activism.

The focus on social history as "history from below" treats ex-servicemen as a potentially marginalised group.<sup>141</sup> A limited number of studies dispute this trend, although studies of Second World War ex-servicemen in parliamentary affairs are scarce.<sup>142</sup> Social scientists show a similar disinterest in the middle-class as a group.<sup>143</sup> However, there has been some thought-provoking work done regarding the First World War.<sup>144</sup> These studies provide useful insights into analytic methodologies.

The privileged position of White South Africa ex-servicemen in South African society makes a comparison of their situation with veterans from other countries problematic. Angel Alcade and Xose Seixas warn against making generalisations from global Second World War veteran historiography, which casts veterans as marginalised groups.<sup>145</sup> Studies on Canadian-Indian,<sup>146</sup> Afro-American,<sup>147</sup>

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- <sup>138</sup> EG Malherbe, 'Race Attitudes and Education', in *Hoernle Memorial Lecture*, Institute of Race Relations (1946); Van Jaarsveld, *Van van Riebeeck Tot PW Botha*; Roos, *Ordinary Springboks*, 4.
- <sup>139</sup> JE Brooks, 'Winning the Peace: Georgia Veterans and the Struggle to Define the Political Legacy of World War II', *The Journal of Southern History*, LXVI, no. 3 (2000), 580.
- <sup>140</sup> D Flores, 'Politicization Beyond Politics: Narratives and Mechanisms of Iraq War Veterans' Activism', *Armed Forces and Society*, 43, no. 1 (2017), 169.
- <sup>141</sup> Á Alcalde and X Seixas, *War Veterans and the World after 1945* (London: Routledge, 2018), 3.
- <sup>142</sup> M Lumb, S Bennett, and J Moremon, *Commonwealth Members of Parliament Who Have Served in War*, Parliament of Australia (2007).
- <sup>143</sup> MP Flemmen *et al.*, 'Forms of Capital and Modes of Closure in Upper Class Reproduction', *Sociology* 51, no. 6 (2017), 1278.
- <sup>144</sup> R Carr, 'Conservative Veteran M.P.s and the "lost Generation" Narrative after the First World War', *Historical Research*, 85, no. 228 (2012), 284–305; D Dutton 'Carr, R. (2013). Veteran MPs and Conservative Politics in the Aftermath of the Great War. The Memory of All That', *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 24, no. 4 (2013), 674–76; A Samson, 'Mining Magnates and World War One', *Unpublished Article* (Johannesburg: 2012); I van der Waag, 'Smuts's Generals: Towards a First Portrait of the South African High Command, 1912-1948', *War in History*, 18, no. 1 (2011), 33–61; M Johnson, 'Leading from the Front: The "Service Members" in Parliament, the Armed Forces, and British Politics during the Great War', *English Historical Review*, 130, no. 544 (2015), 613–45; S Ward, 'The British Veterans' Ticket of 1918', *Journal of British Studies*, 8, no. 1 (1968), 155–69.
- <sup>145</sup> Alcalde and Seixas, *War Veterans and the World after 1945*, 3.
- <sup>146</sup> RA Innes, 'The Socio-Political Influence of the Second World War Saskatchewan Aboriginal Veterans, 1945-1960' (Master's Dissertation, University of Saskatchewan, 2000); RP Toomey, 'Canadian Indians and the Second World War: The Pivotal Event of the 20th Century for Canadian Indians and Canadian Indian Policy ?' (Master's Dissertation, University of Northern British Columbia, 2002).
- <sup>147</sup> CS Parker, 'When Politics Becomes Protest: Black Veterans and Political Activism in the Postwar South', *Journal of Politics*, 71, no. 1 (2009), 113–31.



Indian-American<sup>148</sup> and African<sup>149</sup> ex-servicemen emphasise veteran marginalisation. These studies suggest that ex-servicemen developed a 'sense of entitlement' or special privilege as a result of their service. But poor demobilisation policies and societal reintegration aggravate the feeling of entitlement, making the veteran vulnerable to mobilisation by political elites.<sup>150</sup> While White South African ex-servicemen may not be reflective of such groups, their war experience may have set them apart from society. Roos observes, "veterans were different to other White men in South Africa. They stood out as a social category, and the bonds of comradeship they developed on active service were, for most, lifelong".<sup>151</sup> South African White ex-servicemen did develop both a 'sense of entitlement' and a sense of solidarity in the post-world order.<sup>152</sup>

There is a clear, and definite, gap in the literature appertaining to the post-war roles played by demobilised White South African servicemen in the political arena. Global literature confirms that the nexus between military service and veteran political activism, is a valid area of enquiry.

### 3. AIM AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The aims of this study are to to gain a better understanding of the roles played by White ex-servicemen in political opposition to the National Party in South Africa, from 1948 to 1961. The study focuses on White ex-servicemen that were politically active after the war through to 1961.

The timeframe for the study covers the period from the outbreak of war in September 1939 through to the proclamation of the Republic in May 1961. The reason for this was to enable an examination of the formative influences of the ex-servicemen's war experience on their post-war political careers. Gibbs refers to this period as the 'twilight years' of the Union.<sup>153</sup> The period marks a transition in South African history, with the systematic dismantling of the grand experiment of 'White South Africanism' and its replacement with a rigid ideology of Afrikaner nationalism and racial apartheid. MacMillan's 'Winds of Change' speech, the outbreak of violence in Sharpeville in 1960 and the declaration of the Republic in 1961 mark the end of this period.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> AR Bernstein, *American Indians and World War II: Toward a New Era in Indian Affairs* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999); KW Townsend, *World War II and the American Indian* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000).

<sup>149</sup> Grundlingh, 'Aspects of the Impact of the Second World War on the Lives of Black South African and British Colonial Soldiers'; D Killingray, 'Ex-Servicemen, and Politics in the Gold Coast, 1939-50', *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 21, no. 3 (1983), 523-34; AM Israel, 'Ex-Servicemen at the Crossroads: Protest and Politics in Post-War Ghana', *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 30, no. 2 (1992), 359-68; A Tembo, 'The Impact of the Second World War on Northern Rhodesia-1939-1953' (PhD Thesis, University of the Free State, 2015).

<sup>150</sup> Alcalde and Seixas, *War Veterans and the World after 1945*; G Huxford *et al.*, 'Writing Veterans' History: A Conversation on the Twentieth Century', *War & Society* (2019), 1-24.

<sup>151</sup> Roos, 'The Springbok and the Skunk', 660.

<sup>152</sup> Roos, 660.

<sup>153</sup> In 1950 Henry Gibbs used this term to express his dismay in the reversal that National Party policies signified for South Africa. "It seems now that this is no half-light heralding a dawn, but twilight in South Africa". H Gibbs, *Twilight in South Africa* (London: Jarrolds, 1950), 280.

<sup>154</sup> Waddy, 'Certain Destiny: The Presentist Obsession with 'Apartheid' in South African History', 74.

The study has the following three research objectives:

- To examine the extent to which participation in the Second World War influenced ex-servicemen and their later political careers.
- To examine the influences exerted by ex-servicemen, as a collective (i.e. veteran political movements) on opposition politics. Inter alia, to evaluate the usefulness of veteran status as a coherent category.
- To examine the interactions, on a transactional level, of leading ex-servicemen in the South African political arena in the years between 1948 and 1961, with specific reference to networks of influence and obligation derived from a collective war experience. To assess the role of these veterans within the wider South African political discourse.

#### **4. AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

Writing this thesis revealed several interesting areas for further enquiry which were not pursued either due to the limitation of space or because they fell outside the stated scope. These included, but are not limited to the following.

- A reoccurring theme in South African history writing is the use of constructed identities to support the narrative. Both nationalist and radical historians use constructed identities to deliver a crisp description of the struggle of coherent and homogenous groups for dominance in South Africa. However, an alternative to the divisiveness of using identity, be it class, ethnicity or race, lies in the ideas of South Africanism. The study uncovered efforts within the elite white population to construct a shared 'South Africanism'. Smuts attempts to merge the provincial elites into one South African identity is not only an area for further enquiry but also speaks to Pierre Bourdieu's concepts on the transformation of capital between both fields and types.
- In the same vein, the grouping of all whites which did not form part of Afrikanerdom into one pseudo-typology (i.e. English-speaking) obscured the individual histories of these communities and convoluted many threads of history into an indecipherable identity loosely known as the English-speaking South African. Today a more ambiguous 'White' identity in dialectic conflict with a generic 'Black' identity threatens to further obscure understanding of these communities' nuances and minutiae.
- The discussion of the differences between the African and Italian Campaigns highlighted the varying psychological impact of war on soldiers fighting in different campaigns. The deep impression or lack thereof which two such different Campaigns had on the fighting soldier is a field for further research.

- The scope of the study covered the Union of South Africa from 1939 until 1960. However, after the declaration of Republic additional ex-servicemen surfaced in politics, thus opening the possibility to extend the study to include the ex-servicemen in politics during the Republic of South Africa as well.
- The symbiotic relationship between business and politics lurked ever-present throughout the discussion. This is evident when considering the number of ex-servicemen that had found employment in Anglo-American, which under the leadership of Oppenheimer supported a progressive business agenda in South Africa. There needs to be further investigation into the nexus between business, politics and the formation of a shared South African identity.
- The sample group of this thesis were neither ordinary soldiers nor predominantly Generals, thereby positioning the study somewhere between history from below and the broad brushes of general history. The study thus provides a view from the middle and suggests that not only is the view from the middle possible, but it also can provide invaluable insights into the pragmatic synthesis of the ideological conflicts.
- The dual-use of prosopography and biography leveraged quantitative and qualitative methods to re-evaluate previously accepted views, thereby giving more substance to the foundations of historical debate. This technique is a powerful addition to the historian's toolbox.

## 5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The historical method was used. It is versatile and adaptable. As Jonathon Moses and Torbjorn Knutsen explain:

The core of the method is to probe evidence in order to determine its solidity. The most refreshing quality of the historical method is that the historian presents his case in everyday language. The historical method is remarkably varied allowing the utilisation of a wide range of approaches and perspectives to determine the veracity of claims.<sup>155</sup>

Everatt observes that a good historian is not “restricted by methodology or ideology to one data source or the other. He finds useful, often vital data, everywhere, attracted to whatever seems to be glinting in the gloom”.<sup>156</sup> This universal, eclectic method accommodates collective and individual perspectives. In this spirit, this study used various data resources. The study, in the first instance, relied on the personal experiences of the ex-servicemen. In this regard, ten memoirs,

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<sup>155</sup> JW Moses and TL Knutsen, *Ways of Knowing: Competing Methodologies in Social and Political Science* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), 117.

<sup>156</sup> D Everatt, ‘The historian who can help us all make sense of the mess the world’s in’, *The Conversation* (27 June 2019). Available: <https://theconversation.com/the-historian-who-can-help-us-all-make-sense-of-the-mess-the-worlds-in-118469> [Accessed: 3 July 2019].

autobiographies, and personal accounts (Malherbe,<sup>157</sup> Graaff,<sup>158</sup> Yossel (Joe) Slovo,<sup>159</sup> Eglin,<sup>160</sup> Gideon Jacobs,<sup>161</sup> Helen Joseph,<sup>162</sup> Len Lee-Warden,<sup>163</sup> David Brokensha,<sup>164</sup> James Chutter<sup>165</sup> and Kane-Berman<sup>166</sup>) were examined and placed alongside an additional ten biographies (Oppenheimer,<sup>167</sup> Adolphus (Sailor) Malan,<sup>168</sup> Brown,<sup>169</sup> Lionel (Rusty) Bernstein,<sup>170</sup> Ivan Schermbrucker,<sup>171</sup> Leopold (Leo) Lovell,<sup>172</sup> Jacobus (Kosie) Marais,<sup>173</sup> Isacowitz,<sup>174</sup> Walter Hain<sup>175</sup> and Fred Carneson.<sup>176</sup>). Most are published works: a few only are held in manuscript form in libraries and repositories (Lee-Warden,<sup>177</sup> and Kane-Berman<sup>178</sup>). Furthermore, 13 transcribed interviews support these life histories (Brian Hackland's interviews with Eglin, Jan Steytler, Harry Schwarz, Vause Raw and Graaff.<sup>179</sup> Everatt's interviews with Piet Beyleveld and Carneson.<sup>180</sup> Terri Barnes interviews with Hilder and Bernstein.<sup>181</sup> Norman Bromberger's interview with Brown.<sup>182</sup> Pinnocks' interview with Brain Bunting.<sup>183</sup> Julie Fredrikse's interviews with Carneson, Slovo, and Wolfie Kodesh<sup>184</sup>). These personal accounts give authenticity and depth to the narrative and were treated circumspectly and triangulated with a range of other source material.

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- <sup>157</sup> EG Malherbe, *Never a Dull Moment* (Cape Town: Howard Timmins, 1981).
- <sup>158</sup> Mouton, 'No Prime Minister Could Want a Better Leader of the Opposition', 48–69; Graaff, *Div Looks Back*.
- <sup>159</sup> Slovo, *Slovo: The Unfinished Autobiography*.
- <sup>160</sup> Mouton, 'One of the Architects of Our Democracy'; Eglin, *Crossing the Borders of Power*.
- <sup>161</sup> G Jacobs, *Beckoning Horizons* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1985).
- <sup>162</sup> H Joseph, *Side by Side. The autobiography of Helen Joseph* (London: Zed Books, 1986). Available: <https://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/chapter-iii-my-very-ordinary-life> [Accessed: 15 September 2020].
- <sup>163</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2521 aa, David Everatt Papers, 'Memoirs Len Lee-Warden'.
- <sup>164</sup> D Brokensha, *Brokies Way* (2007), Available: [www.brokiesway.co.za/book.html](http://www.brokiesway.co.za/book.html). [Accessed: 15 September 2020].
- <sup>165</sup> JB Chutter, *Captivity Captive* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1954)
- <sup>166</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2077, Kane-Berman, 'The Torch Commando. Its Beginning and End'.
- <sup>167</sup> A Hocking, *Oppenheimer and Son* (Johannesburg: McGraw-Hill, 1973).
- <sup>168</sup> N Franks, *Sky Tiger: The Story of Group Captain Sailor Malan, DSO DFC* (London: William Kimber, 1980); Nasson, 'A Flying Springbok of Wartime British Skies'; O Walker, *Sailor Malan: A Biography* (London: Cassel & Son, 1953).
- <sup>169</sup> Cardo, *Opening Men's Eyes*.
- <sup>170</sup> Bernstein, *Memory Against Forgetting*.
- <sup>171</sup> Kirkaldy, 'Very Ordinary Communists'.
- <sup>172</sup> Lovell, *For the Love of Justice*.
- <sup>173</sup> C Venter, 'Majoor JP Marais: Die Skepper van Klipdrif Brandewyn', *Historia*, 53, no. 1 (2008), 102–29.
- <sup>174</sup> R Isacowitz, *Telling People What They Do Not Want to Hear A Liberal Life under Apartheid* [kindle edition, pages 526] (Tel Aviv: Kibbitzer Books, 2020).
- <sup>175</sup> P Hain, *Ad and Wal: A Story of Values, Duty, Sacrifice* (London: Biteback Publishing, 2014)
- <sup>176</sup> Carneson, *Red in the Rainbow*.
- <sup>177</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2521 aa, David Everatt Papers, 'Memoirs Len Lee-Warden'.
- <sup>178</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2077, Kane-Berman, 'The Torch Commando. Its Beginning and End'.
- <sup>179</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2242 Hackland
- <sup>180</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2525aa, Interviews by Everatt
- <sup>181</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A3299 E1, Hilder and Rusty Bernstein Papers, 'Interview by Terri Barnes for the ANC / University of Connecticut Oral History Project, Cape Town, 28 February 2001'
- <sup>182</sup> Alan Paton Centre and Struggle Archives (Hereafter APC), Oral History Project of the Alan Paton Centre (Hereafter OHP), 'Interview with Dr Peter Brown conducted by Prof Norman Bromberger in Pietermaritzburg, 21 August 1995'.
- <sup>183</sup> UWC-Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, 'Interview with Brian Bunting by Don Pinnock', <http://www.ruthfirstpapers.org.uk/>.
- <sup>184</sup> SAHA, AL2460.

In the second instance, recourse was made to archives, depositories and special collection libraries to compile biographic profiles of 153 politically exposed ex-servicemen (see Appendix: List of Ex-Servicemen considered in the Prosopographic Study). The most important of these were:

- National Library of South Africa. The National Library maintains a complete set of *Who is Who in Southern Africa* as well as of *Government Gazettes*.
- The Sanlam Library, University of South Africa. This repository provided a range of records and documents on United Party politicians' and candidates' records. The candidate curriculum vitae provided biographic details for the development of the dataset. The records of the Torch provided insight into leadership and functioning of the organisation, while the records kept on other political formations provided the information required to populate the prosopographic dataset.
- The William Cullen Library, University of the Witwatersrand. The Historical Records Archive includes the records of the Springbok Legion. The *Fighting Talk* magazine and the minutes of the Legion provided the identity of ex-servicemen involved in extra-parliamentary politics, while the minutes covered the Legion's post-war engagement with formal political parties. This repository also holds the unpublished memoirs of Kane-Berman and Lee-Warden, as well as the interviews conducted by Hackland and Everatt, and the records of the Anglican Church. The school magazines of the Diocesan College (Bishop's) provided lists and biographic details of old scholars that fought in the war.
- Department of Defence Archives. The Personnel Archive provided the service cards of selected ex-servicemen. Further investigation provided details regarding parliamentary questions and lists that were important to this study. The library at this archive also maintains a collection of *Who is Who in South Africa*, a full set of the regimental histories, a goodly number of the personal accounts (memoirs and autobiographies) and a range of military-related theses and dissertations.
- School Museums. School museums provided access to school magazines and the physical artefacts held at Jeppe High School for Boys and Pretoria Boys' High School.

This study rests on two complementary techniques, namely biographic recollection (the life histories) and prosopography (multiple career line analysis). These techniques are complementary and, when used in unison, can reveal critical insights. Koenraad Verboven, Myriam Carlier and Jan Dumolyn argue that there is also a stable link between them: 'biography attempts to study the entire personality

of an individual, prosopography only focuses on the external similarities and differences of individuals within the group.<sup>185</sup>

The deep desire of many of the opposition, both radical and constitutional politicians, to share their story has resulted in waves of published and unpublished works. Such biographies are a mine of information on the personal networks and a useful means to compile a multiple-career-line database. Graaff, in his memoirs, fastidiously referred to personalities, “Among my pupils were Harold van Hoogstraten, who later became a Member of Parliament, and Monty Crooks [*sic.*] ...Later in life he became one of the most talkative members of the South African Senate.”<sup>186</sup> Such detailed recollections provide useful source material for the contextualisation of the subjects and assists in the mapping of the less obvious relationships and networks. These sources also render biographic data for the statistical analysis.

Biographies as sources are, of course, tainted by the writer’s perspective of his own time and carry the biographer’s own subjective voice, personality and motivations. Furthermore, writers often gloss over aspects relevant to this study. For example, Slovo, in his autobiography, spent little time investigating his decision to enlist in the UDF after 1939. Similarly, Franks in his biography of Sailor Malan openly avoided the question of Malan’s post-war activities. He states: ‘There is no intention in this book to go deeply into the politics of South Africa...those who wish to know more of this whole scene are referred to the final chapter in Olivier Walker’s earlier biography....’ Such hiatuses may be addressed through triangulation with other biographies and with the primary source material. The biographic sketches in Lazerson<sup>187</sup> and Tom Karis,<sup>188</sup> provide some guidance in such an endeavour.

Van der Waag also warns against generalisations from limited sources; ‘All generalisations’, he argues, ‘are suspect, and the narrower the statistical base, the greater the grounds for doubt.’<sup>189</sup> The use of the quantitative, prosopographic technique can strengthen generalisations made from interviews, memoirs, autobiographies, and biographies. Both Richard Carr (in ‘Conservative Veteran MPs and the “Lost Generation” Narrative after the First World War’<sup>190</sup>) and Van der Waag (in ‘Smuts’s generals’<sup>191</sup>) merged a prosopography approach with other qualitative techniques. Prosopography, Verboven, Carlier and Dumolyn agree, provides the means to study

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<sup>185</sup> K Verboven, M Carlier, and J Dumolyn, *A Short Manual to the Art of Prosopography Prosopography Approaches and Applications. A Handbook* (Linacre College, 2007), 40.

<sup>186</sup> Graaff, *Div Looks Back*, 82.

<sup>187</sup> Lazerson, *Against the Tide*, 81–114.

<sup>188</sup> T Karis and GM Cater, *From Protest to Challenge: A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa 1882-1964. Volume 4: Political Profiles 1882-1964* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1977).

<sup>189</sup> Van der Waag, ‘Smuts’s Generals’, 60.

<sup>190</sup> Carr, ‘Conservative Veteran M.P.s and the ‘lost Generation’ Narrative after the First World War’.

<sup>191</sup> Van der Waag, ‘Smuts’s Generals’.



a group of individuals by means of their external or material characteristics, in order to determine linkages and commonalities. It allows for the study of phenomena that transcends individual lives.<sup>192</sup>

Prosopography, therefore, provides for a more extensive statistical base than traditional qualitative studies and thereby provides an opportunity for broader insights. But it is also a useful way to construct knowledge, where organised data is scarce.<sup>193</sup> In a sense, compiling a prosopographic dataset is akin to conducting a questionnaire survey where the subjects have all passed away. This surveying of the documentary footprint left by the subjects' life gives the researcher insights into the subject. The discovery of standardised forms which recorded the subjects' details, simplified the process significantly, especially when the majority of the subjects completed the same forms. For this reason, war records (such as attestation forms) and political party curriculum vitae were most useful.

Bourdieu's ideas on social theory provided a theoretical foundation for this study. One of the pillars of Bourdieu's social theory project was to transcend the objective-subjective bridge in Western philosophy. This provided a good point of departure for my study.<sup>194</sup> Much of his work was prosopographic by nature, with its focus on identifying and analysing the nature of collective identities and cultural reflexes.<sup>195</sup> His ideas are useful because he developed them to support empirical research, dismissing the idea of 'theory for its own sake' as 'gobbledygook'.<sup>196</sup> Thus Bourdieu's thinking and theorising are ideal for supporting the prosopographic-biographic approach used in this study.

The two main ideas of Bourdieu are those of 'Habitus' (Disposition) and 'Capital'. Although intractably linked, habitus and capital are different. Habitus is the internalisation of past experiences to frame future action, in effect forming character.<sup>197</sup> Capital, in contrast, is the transmutation of accumulated advantages (lived and inherited) into tangible and intangible forms of currency (or capital) with which to invest and trade.<sup>198</sup> This study considered both concepts essential to explain the influence of war experience on political activity.

## 6. IMPACT OF COVID 19

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic impacted on the writing of this thesis. The author, as a senior officer in the Armed Forces, became involved in the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) intervention from the onset in March 2020. The demands of providing intelligence support to

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<sup>192</sup> Verboven, Carlier and Dumolyn, *A Short Manual to the Art of Prosopography*, 39.

<sup>193</sup> Verboven, Carlier and Dumolyn, 36.

<sup>194</sup> P Jackson, 'Pierre Bourdieu, the 'Cultural Turn' and the Practice of International History', *Review of International Studies*, 34, no. 1 (2008), 163.

<sup>195</sup> Jackson, 173.

<sup>196</sup> Jackson, 172.

<sup>197</sup> P Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 55.

<sup>198</sup> Jackson, 'Pierre Bourdieu, the 'Cultural Turn' and the Practice of International History', 168.

Operation NOTLELA, the SANDF operation in support of the nation, not only disrupted the author's focus on the study but also denied the author study leave to consolidate the thesis. The government decision to lock down the country denied access to book shops, libraries and archives for most of 2020, thus preventing the inclusion of photographs and other visual material. Only the tenacious efforts of Ms Zelda Green of the Defence College Library made some books available. In some cases, the author resorted to the second-best option of using online editions of books (often without page numbers) to fill the gaps that surfaced in the initial research. The author cited the secondary source when lockdown denied access to additional archival material. Luckily, the exclusion of the few politically exposed ex-servicemen that had escaped initial identification effort did not alter the prosopographic findings. Finally, the constant underlying psychological pressure that COVID-19 pandemic placed on the South African society disrupted the author's family and work life as the author adapted to the new normal.

## **7. TERMINOLOGY**

The language of the period, when judged against modern standards, is often racist and insensitive. In order to make the language usage less inciteful, an element of bowdlerisation has occurred. Throughout the study, the author uses 'White', 'Coloured' and 'Black' according to the apartheid race classification, to stay true to the nomenclature of the historical context of the period. Much of this survives into the New South Africa. However, there were instances – for example in place names – where such terminology cannot be avoided: for example, Hottentots-Holland and Kafferskraal. The reader is asked to bear with this approach.

The author uses 'Afrikaner Nationalist' to denote supporters and members of the NP, instead of merely 'Afrikaner' or 'Afrikaans-speaking' since not all Afrikaners were members or supporters of the National Party. Reference to the National Party will imply the Purified National Party of DF Malan and its subsequent renaming.

Similarly, 'English-speaking' refers to only South Africans originating from Europe who adopted English as their first language. Due to the era's practices, the study distinguishes the Jewish community as a coherent grouping separate from the English-speaking community.

The sample group for the study comprised almost exclusively White men because of the exclusion of women from active combat service. Very few women were allowed to deploy outside the Union of South Africa. The study includes three women, Ms Doreen Dunning, Joseph and Jacqueline de Villiers, because of their unique contribution in the war and post-war politics. All were members of the Woman's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF). The racially segregated society and political system also meant that the dominant political grouping was White male.



## 8. CHAPTER LAYOUT

Chapter One: The War and its Politics. The first chapter introduces the thesis and illustrates the broad strategic landscape of the Union between 1939 and 1961 to provide context to the motivations and activities of the ex-servicemen.

Chapter Two: Biography of the Politicians that Fought. This chapter maps the broad demographic characteristics of the subjects. In the chapter, the focus is on issues such as religion, age distribution, schooling, academic education and occupation of the ex-servicemen as possible politicising factors. The idea of habitus assisted in organising ex-servicemen into discrete classes.

Chapter Three: Military Service of Political Active Ex-Servicemen. This chapter dwells on the military experience of the ex-servicemen during the Second World War. The focus is on exploring how the structural nature of the Union Defence Force, the primary military campaigns, POW experience and the two attempts to politicise the ex-servicemen, namely the SL and the Army Education Scheme (AES) influenced the soldier.

Chapter Four: Veteran Organisations in Politics: 1948-1953. The period from 1946 until 1953 is covered, where ex-servicemen involvement in politics had occurred within veteran organisations, which overlapped with political parties. The opposition political parties, (UP and LP) provided a unified front against the Nationalist Party. The front used the ex-servicemen's collective wartime experience to mobilise them politically.

Chapter Five: Ex-servicemen in Politics 1953-1961. After the collapse of the Veteran Status as a political identity by 1953, ex-servicemen found that invoking collective wartime experience was no longer useful to draw popular political support. Instead, ex-servicemen relied on wartime camaraderie to build consensus within established political parties. Personal loyalties formed during the war played a more significant role than the collective veteran identity.

Chapter Six: Conclusions. The chapter deals with the relationship between military service and political activism. These conclusions are significant for understanding the future engagement of the military veteran community as a potential vehicle for social change.

## CHAPTER ONE: THE WAR AND ITS POLITICS

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### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

South African history, from the declaration of war in 1939 through to the coming of the Republic in 1961, was turbulent. Despite playing a part in defeating Nazism and being part of the formation of the United Nations, South Africa stood accused of acting on the darker impulses of antisemitism and racism by her riding roughshod over the very human rights she had written into the United Nations (UN) preamble. Every aspect of South African society and politics was in some way entangled with the global tapestry. South Africans were quick to appropriate ideas, concepts, and alliances from the global context, thereby imposing half-assimilated solutions onto the South African situation. The English-speakers, who dominated white-collar occupations were generally economically better off than the Afrikaners.<sup>199</sup> Many English-speakers held a sentimental attachment to the idea of the earlier British Empire despite fundamental changes that had happened since 1910. The Balfour Declaration of 1926 and the Statute of Westminster of 1931 acknowledged the independence of the Dominions within the British Commonwealth. Thus, many English-speakers saw the Commonwealth as an extension of the British Empire by arguing that the crown was indivisible.<sup>200</sup>

In contrast, the Afrikaners argued among themselves over whether South Africa could be truly sovereign within the multinational Commonwealth and whether other white groupings could be truly South African. The emerging Afrikaner intelligentsia had borrowed from continental theology and philosophy adopting Kuper-ism and various forms of National Socialism to argue for the discarding of historic loyalties in favour of narrower national survival. The 1938 Centenary celebrations of the Great Trek served further to strengthen Afrikaner nationalism and cultural exclusivity. The reawakening of the Afrikaners' historical grievance after Union along with a perceived British weakness translated into growing Afrikaner support for Germany and the authoritarianism embedded in Nazism. In 1942, John (BJ) Vorster, an *Ossewabrandwag* (OB) General, and later State President, succinctly stated, "In Italy it is called Fascism, in Germany National Socialism and in South Africa Christian Nationalism".<sup>201</sup> The Afrikaner Nationalists' association with fascism before and during the war would not be forgotten by left-wing radicals and liberals who would thereafter work to embed the association in the public mind.<sup>202</sup> The Afrikaner nationalists' assimilation of some fascist ideas

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<sup>199</sup> Shain, *A Perfect Storm*, 40; GH Calpin, *There Are No South Africans* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, 1941), 16, 20.

<sup>200</sup> Calpin, *There Are No South Africans*, 137.

<sup>201</sup> Furlong, *Between Crown and Swastika*, 246.

<sup>202</sup> Furlong, xii.

provided a template to blame the Jewish community for the Afrikaners' socio-economic marginalisation.<sup>203</sup> In 1931 DF Malan, a Dutch Reformed Church theologian, Minister of the Interior and editor of *Die Burger*, commented that "...it is very easy to rouse a feeling of hate towards the Jews in this country".<sup>204</sup> The radical right and Malan were quick to group Jews, Communists and liberals (by implication the English-speaking South Africans) as the enemy of the *Afrikaner Volk* (Afrikaner Nation).<sup>205</sup>

The South African Jewish Board of Jewish Deputies was wary of growing antisemitism in Europe. Therefore they cautiously monitored rising antisemitism in South Africa.<sup>206</sup> In 1934, Morris Alexander, a lawyer, Jewish community leader and Member of Parliament (MP), had already warned of an impending war against the South African Jewish community.<sup>207</sup> These entanglements meant that by 1939 South Africa was probably divided more along philosophical/ideological lines than strict Anglo-Afrikaner ethnic lines.

The war only worsened the tensions within the White community.<sup>208</sup> Soldiers that returned from fighting the war were struck by how little the war had changed South African society.<sup>209</sup> Instead of South African society being liberalised by the war as the liberals had hoped, it seemed that political opinion had drifted to the right.<sup>210</sup> The subsequent defeat of the United Party (UP) by a Fascist tainted National Party (NP) in 1948, confronted the ex-servicemen with the reality that their victory against fascism in Europe had not weakened the appeal of authoritarianism of identity politics at home.

This chapter provides a broad panorama of the political-military landscape that shaped the servicemen politically and contributed to their later involvement in politics. This chapter exposes the fractured nature of the White community that made South Africa a fertile ground for foreign ideas, such as fascism, to grow. Foreign ideas grafted onto historical grievances and nourished wartime animosities grew to bitter fruit which the ex-servicemen had digested on their return from the fight against the root evil of Fascism in North Africa and Europe. The defeat of the UP, and General Jan Smuts, their Commander-in-Chief, in the 1948 elections by the fascist-tainted NP added to the returning ex-servicemen's anguish. For the ex-servicemen that had defeated fascism in the war, the NP victory at the polls negated their sacrifice.<sup>211</sup> This chapter traces their opposition to the NP's grand reorganisation of South African society, which included the erasure of their legacy and shows how the ex-servicemen's activism soon drew them into a maze of opposition initiatives, which

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<sup>203</sup> Shain, *A Perfect Storm*, 40.

<sup>204</sup> Shain, 7.

<sup>205</sup> Shain, 41; Calpin, *There Are No South Africans*, 193, 196–97.

<sup>206</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *South African Jews in World War Two*, 2.

<sup>207</sup> Shain, *A Perfect Storm*, 40.

<sup>208</sup> R Steyn, *Seven Votes How WWII Changed South Africa forever* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2020), 188–189.

<sup>209</sup> Horn, *In Enemy Hands*, 242.

<sup>210</sup> Bernstein, *Memory Against Forgetting*, 77.

<sup>211</sup> White, 'The South African Parliamentary Opposition, 1948–1953', 260.

entangled the ex-servicemen's identity with the broader opposition to all the NP represented. Furthermore, the mix of political views that co-existed in the broader ex-serviceman identity led to the blurring of the lines between liberalism, radicalism, non-racialism and parliamentary opposition. This chapter positions the ex-servicemen's contribution to Union politics from 1945 until 1960 and explores how military service in the war provided a thread of continuity in the White community's struggle against the formulation of Apartheid in South Africa.

## 1.2 DIVIDED NATION

The Union of South Africa before the war was a divided nation. This division also extended to the White population. Afrikaner nationalists have argued that these divisions ran almost exclusively along language or cultural lines pitting English-speakers against Afrikaans-speakers.<sup>212</sup> The dialectical argument was not unexpected, as Afrikaans was declared an official language in 1925 which was in itself a highly politicised event. In that same year, Christian Louis Leipoldt observed that language had become deeply enmeshed with the Afrikaner nationalist political struggle and discourse.<sup>213</sup> However, closer inspection suggests that by the late 1930s the central discourse revolved around the notions of Afrikaner Nationalism and a 'South Africanism',<sup>214</sup> with the Afrikaner being the only group divided by these positions.<sup>215</sup> The description of the 1938 election by Deneys Reitz, a Cabinet minister in Barry Hertzog's Cabinet and later during the war, Smuts's deputy Prime Minister, best captures the prevalent mood; "Rival orators thundered at each other; charge and counter charge were levelled and, again, the ill will and the friction was between the Dutch, while the English-speaking voters stood aloof but supported the less intolerant side."<sup>216</sup>

The Afrikaner nationalists nursed a grievance against the British, and by association, against English-speaking South Africans.<sup>217</sup> The Afrikaner memory reached back to evoke the Slagtersnek Rebellion in 1815 and the atrocities of the Second Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902, particularly in the concentration camps.<sup>218</sup> The Afrikaner rebellion in 1914 and South Africa's entry into the Second World War in 1939 acted to intensify tensions among White South Africans further. Afrikaner nationalists refused to acknowledge any other group, as truly South African, thereby making them almost incapable of accepting White English-speakers as South Africans.<sup>219</sup> Any other interloper group that could tip the demographic scale against the growing Afrikaner nation was perceived as a

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<sup>212</sup> Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 432–41.

<sup>213</sup> Giliomee, 428–29.

<sup>214</sup> Lambert, 'An Identity Threatened', 52.

<sup>215</sup> Van der Waag, *A Military History of Modern South Africa*, 174.

<sup>216</sup> D Reitz, *Adrift on the Open Veld The Anglo-Boer War and Its Aftermath 1899-1943* (Plumstead: Stormberg Publishers, 2014), 503.

<sup>217</sup> FW Reitz, *A Century of Wrong: The South Africa Reader* (London: 'Review of Reviews' Office, 1900), 89.

<sup>218</sup> Calpin, *There Are No South Africans*, 49; Reitz, *A Century of Wrong*, 6.

<sup>219</sup> WK Hancock, *Smuts: The Fields of Force 1919-1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 330; Calpin, *There Are No South Africans*, 45.

threat and reviled.<sup>220</sup> The *Volk* became the voice of South Africa, discarding the opinions of the English-speakers and Jews as un-South African. Likewise, the *Volk* excluded Afrikaans-speaking supporters of the more inclusive ideology of 'South Africanism'. They were either lumped together with the 'English' or airbrushed from the narrative.<sup>221</sup>

Since Union in 1910, the heterogeneous English-speaking community<sup>222</sup> had routinely galvanised against Afrikaner Nationalism. Sporadic protests had been lodged by the English-speaking community during Fusion government from 1934-1939, as Hertzog systematically eroded South Africa's links with Britain.<sup>223</sup> Despite such attempts by Hertzog and his supporters to weaken South Africa's links with Britain, English speakers maintained their ties to Britain. Their close link with volunteer regiments rooted in British tradition that predated Union, symbolised their connection to the empire.<sup>224</sup> The English-speaking school cadet system which linked the schools to the local regiments further bound the English-speaking community to this regimental tradition.<sup>225</sup> In times of national crisis, the English-speakers willingly mobilised in large numbers to support the state by joining these volunteer regiments. These regiments served in both the Second Anglo-Boer War and the First World War.<sup>226</sup> The Union Defence Forces' (UDF's) involvement in the First World War on the side of Britain and her allies further strengthened the English-speaking community's link with the state.<sup>227</sup> During the 1922 Rand Strike, UDF units were called on by Smuts to break up the strikers.<sup>228</sup> In the early 1920s, due to budget constraints, the Active Citizen Force (ACF) units were left to continue on their own volition, which aided to increase community involvement in the running of the volunteer regiments.<sup>229</sup> Thus the English-speaking community saw no contradiction in having loyalty to both Britain and the Union of South Africa.

The English community's political support gravitated towards Smuts in the inter-war years.<sup>230</sup> He had, since the Act of Union in 1910, championed their inclusion in the common 'South Africanism', writing to John Merriman in 1910 that "[o]n our policy of racial peace we carried many English

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<sup>220</sup> E Bradlow, 'Anti-Semitism in the 1930s : Germany and South Africa', *Historia*, 49, no. 2 (2004), 50.

<sup>221</sup> AG Barlow, *That We May Tread Safely* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1960), 122; Calpin, *There Are No South Africans*, 282.

<sup>222</sup> Lambert, 'An Identity Threatened', 50-51; Calpin, *There Are No South Africans*, 12.

<sup>223</sup> Calpin, *There Are No South Africans*, 148-49.

<sup>224</sup> G Tylden, *The Armed Forces of South Africa* (Johannesburg: Trophy Press, 1982), 5, 9, 16, 21.

<sup>225</sup> PKA Digby, 'From Playing Field to Parade Ground The Record of King Edward VII School, Johannesburg', *Military History Journal*, 1, no. 4 (1969). Available: <http://samilitaryhistory.org/vol014pd.html> [Accessed 3 June 2020]; J Lambert, 'Munition Factories ... Turning out a Constant Supply of Living Material': White South African Elite Boys' Schools and the First World War', *South African Historical Journal*, 51 (2004), 74.

<sup>226</sup> Tylden, *The Armed Forces of South Africa*, 5, 9, 16, 21.

<sup>227</sup> I Uys, *Deville Wood* (Johannesburg: Galvin & Sales, 1983), 1; Stapleton, *A Military History of South Africa*, 129.

<sup>228</sup> AM Fokkens, 'The Role and Application of the Union Defence Force in the Suppression of Internal Unrest, 1912-1945' (MMil Thesis, Stellenbosch University, 2006), 31-32.

<sup>229</sup> Tylden, *The Armed Forces of South Africa*, 26.

<sup>230</sup> Lambert, 'An Identity Threatened', 57-58.

constituencies with us, and I think we should continue that policy night and day”.<sup>231</sup> Smuts maintained parity of Afrikaner-English wherever he exerted power. A study of the general staff from 1912 to 1948 also reflects this commitment.<sup>232</sup> Smuts became a stringent supporter of the British Commonwealth and actively participated in the British war effort during the First World War.<sup>233</sup> Smuts’s decision to go to war went a long way to consolidate English-speakers’ support behind him with John Lambert claiming that “[t]he commitment of Smuts and the new ministry to the British cause came as an immense relief to English-speaking South Africans, consolidated their imperial consciousness and underscored their sense of apartness from Nationalist Afrikaners.”<sup>234</sup>

After the war, Smuts’s involvement in the establishment of the League of Nations not only elevated South Africa’s status on the world stage but also strengthened the perception of the Union’s connection with Britain and its former European allies.<sup>235</sup>

Adolf Hitler’s invasion of Czechoslovakia in March 1939, invoked a new sense of urgency in Smuts. He became more committed to involvement in the coming war as the months passed.<sup>236</sup> The supporters of the old South African Party were willing to stand by Smuts. However, when Smuts attempted to sound Hertzog for his views on South Africa’s position on an imminent European war, he was brushed off. Hertzog firmly believed that as Hitler did not intend to go to war, such discussions served no useful purpose.<sup>237</sup> As tensions rose in Europe, Smuts and Reitz accepted an invitation from Ernst Oppenheimer, the heir and then Chairman of Anglo-American and MP, to tour the Kivu area of the Congo during July 1939.<sup>238</sup> By the time Smuts had returned from Central Africa, in August 1939, Hertzog had withdrawn to his farm in the Free State and was not accessible to provide direction on South Africa’s position regarding the impending war. It seemed to Reitz that Hertzog was delaying the inevitable, and was intent on avoiding having to make any decision on the matter of war participation. (He had previously promised to summon Parliament before deciding to declare war).<sup>239</sup> Hertzog’s avoidance, however, was cut short by a peculiarity in the South African constitution which required Parliament to sit to extend the life of the senate. He reluctantly summoned Parliament at the very time war broke out in Europe on 1 September 1939 with the German invasion of Poland.<sup>240</sup> Events caught even Smuts off guard. In a letter to Thomas Lamont, a few days later on 6 September 1939, he confided “A few days ago, I left Pretoria thinking that I might be out of government soon

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<sup>231</sup> WK Hancock, *Smuts: The Sanguine Years 1870-1919* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), 230.

<sup>232</sup> Van der Waag, ‘Smuts’s Generals’, 50.

<sup>233</sup> Hancock, *Smuts: The Sanguine Years*, 434, 438.

<sup>234</sup> Lambert, ‘An Identity Threatened’, 68.

<sup>235</sup> Hancock, *Smuts: The Sanguine Years*, 463.

<sup>236</sup> Hancock, *Smuts: The Fields of Force*, 308, 314.

<sup>237</sup> Reitz, *Adrift on the Open Veld*, 509.

<sup>238</sup> Hancock, *Smuts: The Fields of Force*, 314; Reitz, *Adrift on the Open Veld*, 509.

<sup>239</sup> Reitz, *Adrift on the Open Veld*, 514.

<sup>240</sup> Reitz, 515.



and planning for the future when I should be free of public duties. Suddenly the whole situation changed.”<sup>241</sup>

Hertzog was confident that the majority of Afrikaners, which in his mind represented the *volkswil* (Afrikaner national will or national interest) of all South Africans, would choose to remain neutral, keeping South Africa a spectator to the world in crisis. Hertzog believed that the Balfour Declaration of 1926, and the Statute of Westminster of 1931 gave South Africa the legal right to decide to remain neutral in the war.<sup>242</sup> He was also convinced that a 1938 cabinet position on South Africa’s neutrality, in the case of a war in Europe, would also apply in the case of a war between Germany and the British Commonwealth.<sup>243</sup> Smuts, who was deeply engaged in global affairs, argued that South Africa was so entangled in the economy and defences of the British Commonwealth that it had no choice but to follow Britain into the war.<sup>244</sup> Smuts had in the previous months already called Hitler “nothing but a dire menace to peace”.<sup>245</sup> Smuts was also more in touch with his colleagues in Cabinet and knew that with the backing of the English-speaking MPs, he would only need the support of a minority of the Afrikaans MPs to carry the vote in Parliament.<sup>246</sup> For Smuts’s camp, with even this slimmest of support, it was almost a foregone conclusion that South Africa would enter the war on the side of Britain. Hertzog blundered and blustered his way through a cabinet meeting on Sunday, 3 September 1939, eventually losing the cabinet vote by eight to seven. His defeat in Cabinet paved the way for a parliamentary debate on the issue the next day.<sup>247</sup>

On Monday, 4 September 1939, Hertzog attempted again to argue his case for neutrality, this time in Parliament. He hoped that he could harangue the gathering over to his viewpoint. He equated South African neutrality with independence and that joining Britain in the war would mean Parliament cared more for Britain than for South Africa. In his opinion, it was this misplaced loyalty that was destroying South African unity.<sup>248</sup> He predicted that South Africa’s entry into the war would set Anglo-Afrikaner relations back 50 years.<sup>249</sup> However, again, he failed to appreciate the arithmetic of his position adequately. Nationalists, such as Eben Dönges, Helm van Zyl, Johann Conradie, and Oswald Pirow were confident that Hertzog would win the vote.<sup>250</sup> In contrast, the calculations done

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<sup>241</sup> WK Hancock and J van der Poel, *Selection from Smuts Papers Vol VI* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 189.

<sup>242</sup> Davenport, *South Africa: A Modern History*, 297.

<sup>243</sup> Hancock, *Smuts: The Fields of Force*, 285, 321; Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 439.

<sup>244</sup> Hancock, *Smuts: The Fields of Force*, 315–17.

<sup>245</sup> Letter to J Martine dated 3 August 1939 in Hancock and van der Poel, *Selection from Smuts Papers Vol VI*, 172.

<sup>246</sup> Hancock and van der Poel, *Selection from Smuts Papers Vol VI*, 192; Giliomee argues that the vote went largely along ethnic divisions in the white community. This however denies many Afrikaans-speaking supporters of Smuts, and Smuts himself, and of their Afrikaner-ness. See Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 440.

<sup>247</sup> Reitz, *Adrift on the Open Veld*, 516.

<sup>248</sup> Hancock, *Smuts: The Fields of Force*, 321; Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 440.

<sup>249</sup> Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 440.

<sup>250</sup> Graaff, *Div Looks Back*, 62.



by members in the UP camp such as Reitz, Louis Esselen, and Colin Steyn, pointed to a Smuts victory.<sup>251</sup> Reitz analysed the arithmetic of the Smuts camp as follows;

On the one hand, the 29 Nationalists, all violently anti-British, would vote for anything anti-British and they would support a neutrality motion. With his own tail of 38, and with the 29 Nationalist recalcitrants, he commanded 67 votes against our 66, but we knew that the 7 Dominionites, the 4 Labour Members, and the 3 Native Representatives were with us, giving us a majority of thirteen.<sup>252</sup>

After a long debate on 4 September 1939, the votes returned 67 in favour of Hertzog's motion and 80 in favour of Smuts's amendment. Hertzog was defeated.<sup>253</sup> He requested the Governor General, Sir Patrick Duncan, to dissolve Parliament. Duncan believing that Smuts could form a viable government, and wishing to avoid an outbreak of public violence, immediately called on Smuts to form a new cabinet.<sup>254</sup> By 6 September 1939, Smuts had formed a new government and included the Labour and Dominion parties which had supported his motion to declare war on Germany.<sup>255</sup> Smuts again allocated an equal number of cabinet posts to Afrikaans and English-speakers, reflecting his commitment to unify the White population.<sup>256</sup>

A few months later Smuts found himself again alongside his old friend Winston Churchill, who became Prime Minister of Britain on 10 May 1940, in the fight against Germany.<sup>257</sup> His ongoing presence in the rarefied circles of Allied command and global affairs had led him to maintain friendships with many prominent statesmen. For DF Malan's NP, who had always derided Smuts' reconciliatory position, such cosmopolitanism symbolised the antithesis of Afrikaner Nationalism. For the Afrikaner nationalist, Smuts's and the English-speakers' direct participation in the war indicated loyalty to Britain and disloyalty to South Africa.<sup>258</sup> Events had cast Smuts and the UP as pro-British, at odds with the Afrikaner interests.<sup>259</sup>

The ideological middle ground that Hertzog represented was swallowed up into the re-unified NP when Hertzog and his 38 supporters joined DF Malan on 9 September 1940.<sup>260</sup> Smuts was confident that this alliance would not survive, dismissing it with the question "Have you ever heard in history

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<sup>251</sup> Hancock, *Smuts: The Fields of Force*, 320; Reitz, *Adrift on the Open Veld*, 517.

<sup>252</sup> Reitz, *Adrift on the Open Veld*, 517.

<sup>253</sup> Steyn, *Seven Votes*, 38-46; Bourhill, 'Red Tabs', 36. The language split was 54 English and 26 Afrikaans votes for Smuts and 1 English and 66 Afrikaans votes for Hertzog.

<sup>254</sup> Steyn, *Seven Votes*, 51; Davenport, *South Africa: A Modern History*, 297. According to Graaff, Louis Esselen had some influence on Duncan, as Esselen had found a precedent from Canada where the Governor could appoint a new Prime Minister without calling new elections, see Graaff, *Div Looks Back*, 62.

<sup>255</sup> Reitz, *Adrift on the Open Veld*, 519.

<sup>256</sup> Van der Waag, *A Military History of Modern South Africa*, 173.

<sup>257</sup> Hancock, *Smuts: The Fields of Force*, 356.

<sup>258</sup> Lambert, "Their Finest Hour?", 75.

<sup>259</sup> Hancock, *Smuts: The Sanguine Years*, 335; Van der Waag, *A Military History of Modern South Africa*, 178.

<sup>260</sup> Hancock, *Smuts: The Fields of Force*, 335; Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 441; Steyn, *Seven Votes*, 54.

of Afrikaners [*sic.*] combining into a bloc?"<sup>261</sup> His private opinion of DF Malan and the NP was even more caustic when he shared a jibe with Ernst Oppenheimer on a Central African holiday in 1939. Reitz, as a fellow guest of the Oppenheimer's, recalls

He [Smuts] summed up his opinion of the National Party by telling us that during the last elections an inmate of the Pretoria asylum had rung up their leader Dr Malan and said 'Doctor, doctor, I just want to let you know all we lunatics over here are Nationalists.'<sup>262</sup>

It was not long before the more radical nationalists, enamoured by the fascism so prevalent at the time, grew weary of Hertzog's views, especially his coolness towards the idea of a Republic, and his willingness to accommodate English-speakers in future nationalistic plans.<sup>263</sup> They soon found a way to jettison him and his ideology into the political wilderness. His death in November 1942, marked the final collapse of the 'middle ground' position in White politics.<sup>264</sup> Afrikanerdom and by implication, White South Africa, was divided between the national exclusivity of DF Malan and the internationalist holism of Smuts.

By then, the South African liberals established themselves as a small but influential group within Smuts's sphere of influence.<sup>265</sup> For them, Smuts's stand against rising fascism was correct. They had hoped that participation in the war would allow for the construction of a more equitable post-war world order, and place South Africa in a strong position within a free and powerful commonwealth.<sup>266</sup> For instance, Harry Oppenheimer believed that the war provided "the possibility of realising the ideal of a new, truly united, happier and juster [*sic.*] South African society and nation".<sup>267</sup>

### 1.3 THE WAR YEARS 1939-1945

#### 1.3.1 The gathering storm

German and Italian preparations for war were not unknown to the UDF. The Union Minister of Defence between 1933 and 1939, Pirow, had visited Germany in 1936 and 1938, in an attempt to smooth relations between Britain and Germany, and was impressed by the German military machine.<sup>268</sup> In 1937, the UDF sent Colonel George Brink, the Director of Army Training, on a staff

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<sup>261</sup> Hancock and Van der Poel, *Selection from Smuts Papers Vol VI*, 200.

<sup>262</sup> Reitz, *Adrift on the Open Veld*, 513.

<sup>263</sup> Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 441.

<sup>264</sup> Hancock, *Smuts: The Fields of Force*, 353; Van der Waag, *A Military History of Modern South Africa*, 174. Hertzog's final exodus from politics was ironically initiated by a whispering campaign accusing him of being a collaborator of a British-Jewish conspiracy. The conspiracy included suggestions of freemasonry for good measure.

<sup>265</sup> Everatt, *The Origins of Non-Racialism*, 9–12.

<sup>266</sup> C Birkby, *Uncle George: The Boer Boyhood, Letters, and Battles of Lieutenant-General George Edwin Brink* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1987); See Dubow, 'Uncovering the Historic Strands of Egalitarian Liberalism in South Africa', 7–24.

<sup>267</sup> Birkby, *Uncle George*, xvii.

<sup>268</sup> HJ Martin and ND Orpen, *South Africa at War: Military and Industrial Organisation and Operations in Connection with the Conduct of the War, 1939-1945* (Wynberg: Purnell & Sons, 1979), 11, 17; FA Mouton, *The Opportunist: The Political Life of Oswald Pirow, 1915-1959* (Pretoria: Protea Book House, 2020), 90-91, 115-119.

visit to the continent. Brink returned convinced that Germany and Italy were on a war footing.<sup>269</sup> The militarisation of German society enthralled Brink. He wrote to his wife: "Can you wonder that the German nation is a military nation?"<sup>270</sup> The Italians, however, failed to impress him. Brink noticed details, and he noted how the Italian infantry bunched and advanced in defile. The Italian army, Brink felt, lacked combat knowledge and discipline under pressure.<sup>271</sup>

Despite foreknowledge of German and Italian war preparations, the UDF was thoroughly unprepared for the outbreak of war in September 1939.<sup>272</sup> It had a Permanent Force establishment of 352 officers and 5 033 men; however, it was 2 032 under-strength. Few of the appointed 313 officers, had received staff training. The ACF was in no better situation with an active strength of 918 officers and 12 572 men, which was 1 015 under the establishment strength of 14 361 officers and men.<sup>273</sup> The commando system, which was rurally based and overwhelmingly Afrikaans, could call on 122 000 men, of which only 18 000 were reasonably equipped.<sup>274</sup> The equipment available to the UDF was equally outdated or obsolete. There were 71 artillery pieces in service, with barely enough ammunition for a day's shooting. Armoured vehicles amounted to two obsolete medium tanks, two obsolete armoured cars and two locally built experimental armoured cars. The South African Air Force (SAAF), the darling of Sir Pierre van Ryneveld, the Chief of the General Staff (CGS), fared marginally better with four modern Hurricane fighters, one Blenheim fighter, six Fury fighters, one Fairey bomber, eighteen Junker 86s, and 53 Hartbeest biplane bombers.<sup>275</sup> Years of neglect meant that South Africa had to rebuild the UDF almost from the ground up.<sup>276</sup>

The lack of material preparations carried over into the lack of realism within the UDF's planning scenarios on the strategic level. Previous planning prepared by the British, South African, and Rhodesian governments, was dusted off and modified. Four plans existed if Portugal became hostile. These were Plan W for the occupation of Southern Angola by the UDF, Plan X which required Rhodesian forces to occupy Northern Angola, Plan Y for the capture of Beira by the Rhodesians and Plan Z for the occupation of Southern Mozambique by South Africa.<sup>277</sup> Van Ryneveld had worked on the concept of Plan Z in 1935.<sup>278</sup> The plan's outlandish assumptions suggest that it was a hypothetical planning concept. For instance, an unidentified enemy would land an expeditionary

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<sup>269</sup> Birkby, *Uncle George*, 97.

<sup>270</sup> Birkby, 85.

<sup>271</sup> D Katz, *South Africans versus Rommel: The Untold Story of the Desert War in World War II* (Johannesburg: Delta Books, 2018), 38.

<sup>272</sup> Hancock, *Smuts: The Fields of Force*, 331; Van der Waag, *A Military History of Modern South Africa*, 172.

<sup>273</sup> SADF Archives, 'SA Forces in the Second World War', *Scientia Militaria* 19, no. 3 (1989), 22; N Orpen, *East African and Abyssinian Campaigns* (Cape Town: Purnell & Sons, 1968), 2; Martin and Orpen, *South Africa at War*, 346; Van der Waag, *A Military History of Modern South Africa*, 173.

<sup>274</sup> Van der Waag, *A Military History of Modern South Africa*, 173.

<sup>275</sup> Orpen, *East African and Abyssinian Campaigns*, 2–3; Hancock, *Smuts: The Fields of Force*, 331–32.

<sup>276</sup> Van der Waag, *A Military History of Modern South Africa*, 173.

<sup>277</sup> Van der Waag, 181.

<sup>278</sup> Birkby, *Uncle George*, 95; Martin and Orpen, *South Africa at War*, 7, 61.

force at Lourenco Marques and invade South Africa from there. Van Ryneveld had cast the SAAF in the lead role in the battle, attributing almost omnipotent powers to the aeroplanes which would destroy the invading force's artillery before it could deploy.<sup>279</sup> Brink had elaborated on Plan Z to include the capture of Lourenco Marques.<sup>280</sup> There was speculation that the legacy of this plan resulted in the 1<sup>st</sup> Transvaal Scottish being deployed towards Komatipoort when Italy entered the war on 10 June 1940 in response to intelligence provided by Major Pretorius on the activities of 2 000 German nationals in Mozambique.<sup>281</sup>

By 22 September 1939, Van Ryneveld had developed a proposal that South Africa should have a Home Defence Force of one division and a Mobile Field Force of two divisions. The Mobile Field Force would be fully motorised, making it the first motorised Brigade Group in the British Commonwealth. This broad plan would later evolve into a force of three divisions.<sup>282</sup>

### 1.3.2 Mobilisation

The ACF units were authorised to accept volunteers for training on 22 September 1939.<sup>283</sup> The emotional ties of the empire, military service and regimental honour were influential in the English-speaking units.<sup>284</sup> Participation in the war reaffirmed the English-speaking communities' commitment to Smuts and their connection with Britain,<sup>285</sup> and even before Smuts had declared war, many regiments were already attesting volunteers.<sup>286</sup> Within the ACF and SAAF, there were grumblings of independent plans for mobilisation if the Union had remained neutral.<sup>287</sup>

The enthusiasm to join-up meant that, in many cases, youths under the age of 21 (who needed their parent's written consent to join) and skilled artisans key to the war production (the so-called 'key-men') had to be turned away or 'combed-out'. The Duke of Edinburgh's Own Rifles had to turn away 300 youths.<sup>288</sup> The Cape Town Highlanders experienced similar problems.<sup>289</sup> The 2 Transvaal Scottish had to release over a hundred key-men back to their trades after mobilisation,<sup>290</sup> while, even worse, the 3 Transvaal Scottish, recruiting from the industrial East Rand, had to return almost half of their effective strength to industry.<sup>291</sup> The Pretoria Highlanders also lost about 300 men within

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<sup>279</sup> Birkby, *Uncle George*, 95.

<sup>280</sup> Martin and Orpen, *South Africa at War*, 61.

<sup>281</sup> Van der Waag, *A Military History of Modern South Africa*, 181; EP Hartshorn, *Avenge Tobruk* (Cape Town: Purnell & Sons, 1960), 28–30; Martin and Orpen, *South Africa at War*, 61.

<sup>282</sup> Orpen, *East African and Abyssinian Campaigns*, 4.

<sup>283</sup> Van der Waag, *A Military History of Modern South Africa*, 185.

<sup>284</sup> Lambert, 'Munition Factories', 68.

<sup>285</sup> Lambert, 'An Identity Threatened', 66–67.

<sup>286</sup> Lambert, 'An Identity Threatened', 66–67; South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *South African Jews in World War Two*, 4.

<sup>287</sup> Hartshorn, *Avenge Tobruk*, 13–18; van der Waag, 'The Union Defence Force Between the Two World Wars, 1919–1940', 215.

<sup>288</sup> Orpen, *East African and Abyssinian Campaigns*, 8.

<sup>289</sup> Orpen, *The Cape Town Highlanders 1885–1970*, 112.

<sup>290</sup> C Birkby, *The Saga of the Transvaal Scottish Regiment 1932–1950* (Cape Town: Hodder & Stoughton Ltd, 1950), 20.

<sup>291</sup> Birkby, 21.

three weeks of mobilisation, as units were required to return key-men back to the railways, Mint and Iscor.<sup>292</sup>

Smuts, anticipating Italy's imminent entry into the war,<sup>293</sup> positioned South Africa to play a more substantial combat role. Towards the end of 1939, expecting Benito Mussolini's ambitions in East Africa, Smuts offered a brigade and several SAAF squadrons to strengthen defences in Kenya. Except for four SAAF Squadrons, Smuts's initial offer was declined by the British.<sup>294</sup> Undeterred, Smuts continued to prepare forces for the 'North', and on 16 February 1940 instituted the Africa Service Oath which enabled the employment of soldiers outside the borders of South Africa and anywhere within Africa.<sup>295</sup>

A red tab (*rooi lussies*) worn on the shoulder straps, identified the men who had taken the Africa Service Oath or Red Oath, thereby politicising the war effort.<sup>296</sup> The Afrikaner nationalist movements used every opportunity to undermine the war effort,<sup>297</sup> arguing that for true Afrikaners "service in the armed forces of the Union of South Africa was incompatible with his duty to the Afrikaner People".<sup>298</sup> On the first day of implementation of the oath, approximately 350 men refused.<sup>299</sup> Permanent Force members, who did not take the oath, potentially denied themselves the chance for the rapid promotion that often occurred during the war. However, despite the Nationalists' assertions, post-war investigations were hard-pressed to find substantive evidence of hardship suffered by those not taking the Africa Service Oath.<sup>300</sup>

Afrikaner nationalists, in response to war preparations, pursued extra-parliamentary action in various movements of which the most prominent was the OB. The OB, originally a cultural movement emanating from the Great Trek centenary of 1938,<sup>301</sup> raked up enmity stretching back to the British occupation of the Cape in 1806, Slagtersnek in 1815 and the more recent Second Anglo-Boer War to mobilise supporters. As Justice Minister between 1933 and 1939, Smuts had discreetly monitored the movement.<sup>302</sup> Smuts rightly believed that the OB was "probably only a secret military organisation masquerading as a 'culture' movement".<sup>303</sup> However, the bruising personal consequences of the 1914 Afrikaner Rebellion and the 1922 Rand Strikes, probably made him wary of over-reacting against the movement.<sup>304</sup> During the war as Prime Minister, Smuts deftly hampered the OB's ability

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<sup>292</sup> Orpen, *East African and Abyssinian Campaigns*, 13.

<sup>293</sup> Graaff, *Div Looks Back*, 63.

<sup>294</sup> Van der Waag, *A Military History of Modern South Africa*, 196.

<sup>295</sup> SADF Archives, 'SA Forces in the Second World War', 22.

<sup>296</sup> Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 443.

<sup>297</sup> Malherbe, *Never a Dull Moment*, 213.

<sup>298</sup> Hancock, *Smuts: The Fields of Force*, 331.

<sup>299</sup> Orpen, *East African and Abyssinian Campaigns*, 7.

<sup>300</sup> Boulter, 'FC Erasmus and the Politics of South African Defence 1948-1959', 106.

<sup>301</sup> Van der Waag, *A Military History of Modern South Africa*, 177.

<sup>302</sup> Van der Waag, 174.

<sup>303</sup> Hancock and van der Poel, *Selection from Smuts Papers Vol VI*, 172.

<sup>304</sup> Malherbe, *Never a Dull Moment*, 215.



to be more than a nuisance, despite cries by his supporters to do more.<sup>305</sup> He selectively interned the more subversive OB members, such as Hendrik van der Berg and Vorster (both men who would rise to prominent positions after the war), banned soldiers and civil servants from joining the OB and the *Broederbond* and kept the leader of the OB, Dr Johannes van Rensburg, on a close leash.<sup>306</sup>

To push the point home, towards the end of 1940, Smuts sent a mechanised column called the Steel Commando throughout South Africa to demonstrate the country's newly developed military power. The demonstration was both a warning to the disaffected and a means to recruit the rural Afrikaners.<sup>307</sup> Smuts writing to Margaret Gillett expressed his satisfaction in the outcome:

I have sent a column of motorised troops through the Union, partly to show people what we have been doing in war production, partly to show the flag as they say – and let the disaffected see that they have no chance in mechanical war, and that rebellion is out of the question.<sup>308</sup>

Despite the efforts by the more radicalised Afrikaner nationalists to hinder the war effort, many Afrikaans-speakers and even Afrikaner nationalists joined the war effort. Ernst Malherbe, the Director of Military Intelligence during the war, refers to a survey that “showed that the percentage of Afrikaners in the army was almost exactly the same as in South Africa's White population at the time”.<sup>309</sup> To explain this situation, Albert Grundlingh suggests the power of manna and adventure was more substantial than ideology for many of the Afrikaners who had joined. The ‘poor-White’ population, many of whom were Afrikaans-speaking, were attracted by the higher wages foreign deployments offered.<sup>310</sup>

Soldiers, especially Afrikaans speakers, who took the oath were labelled as traitors of the *Volk* and jeered as *Hanskakies* (traitors).<sup>311</sup> Volunteer soldiers, however, saw wearing the tabs as a public reaffirmation of their faith in Smuts, the righteousness of his war policy, and of the war's eventual outcome.<sup>312</sup> Tension often boiled over to violence, with street fights breaking out between soldiers and nationalists.<sup>313</sup> The brutality of the OB *Stormjaers* (storm troopers) should not be underestimated, especially towards their own. During the 1942 “*Stormjaer's* Treason Trial”, the charred body of a police informant, Louis Nel, was found in a bush in Nylstroom, and a key witness “Dice” Lotter was assaulted and then shot in cold blood in his home.<sup>314</sup> Such incidents only reinforced the argument for a Home Defence Force, and the implementation of more stringent internal stability

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<sup>305</sup> Hancock and van der Poel, *Selection from Smuts Papers Vol VI*, 289–91. Hans van Rensburg complains about wartime restrictions on the OB.

<sup>306</sup> Van der Waag, *A Military History of Modern South Africa*, 182.

<sup>307</sup> Hancock, *Smuts: The Fields of Force*, 354.

<sup>308</sup> Hancock and Van der Poel, *Selection from Smuts Papers Vol VI*, 261.

<sup>309</sup> Malherbe, *Never a Dull Moment*, 217.

<sup>310</sup> Grundlingh, ‘The King's Afrikaners?’, 352–65.

<sup>311</sup> Malherbe, *Never a Dull Moment*, 213.

<sup>312</sup> Hancock, *Smuts: The Fields of Force*, 333; Birkby, *The Saga of the Transvaal Scottish*, 10.

<sup>313</sup> Birkby, *The Saga of the Transvaal Scottish*, 21; Orpen, *The Cape Town Highlanders*, 115–16; Martin and Orpen, *South Africa at War*, 101–3.

<sup>314</sup> Martin and Orpen, *South Africa at War*, 221.

measures such as internments. However, Smuts refused to provide the Afrikaner radical right with martyrs and treated them with such leniency that the number of internments during the war never exceeded 600 at any given time.<sup>315</sup>

The mobilisation of the regiments of the 1 South African Division (1 SA Div) further accentuated the distinction between Afrikaner nationalist and Smuts loyalist – not only did they wear the *rooi lussie*, but many of the mobilised ACF infantry battalions had some kind of association with Britain.<sup>316</sup> The only distinctly ‘Afrikaans’ ACF regiment mobilised in the 1 SA Div was the Regiment Botha, named after the Union of South Africa’s first Prime Minister, Louis Botha, and was associated with Smuts, who was their Colonel-in-Chief.<sup>317</sup> What the Afrikaner nationalists had missed was that despite the regular appropriation of the Caledonian/Gaelic martial traditions, these regiments were not too perturbed about the language or culture of their recruits. As Flight-Sergeant J Sachs, a Jewish volunteer, reflected:

The Transvaal Scottish, The Dukes, the Cape Town Highlanders, the RDLI, the Irish, the RLI, and all the other regiments being brought up to strength in numbers and up to maximum fitness in training. And the usual jokes were going around about the Cohens and the Kellys and the Scotsmen and the Jews. What is more, Jewish affinity for the Irish and Scots regiments was reflected in the roll call each morning, when Goldberg and O’Brien, Weinstein and Macdonald, Hirsch and van Rensburg, were often in close and cordial juxtaposition.<sup>318</sup>

Military planners, commanders and ordinary soldiers worked to politicise the soldiers. They hoped that the shared military experience would bring cohesion to an otherwise diverse force.

In 1940, liberal academics, which included Professor Reinhold Alfred Hornlé, Professor (Jac) Rousseau, Malherbe and Leo Marquard, initiated activities that would result in the establishment of the Army Education Scheme (AES). Both Marquard and Malherbe at the time served in the military training and intelligence structures, which placed them in an ideal position to develop the initiative in the military.<sup>319</sup> They argued that soldiers required education regarding the importance of winning the

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<sup>315</sup> Internments during the war were as follows:

19 Jan 1940	1 April 1941	6 April 1942	22 Jan 1943	31 July 1944	28 Nov 1944	2 Feb 1945	1 May 1945
76	193	232	366	582	376	66	2

Hancock, *Smuts: The Fields of Force*, 340; EG Malherbe, *Never a Dull Moment*, 211–12. Provides a description of the conditions in the internment camps; Van der Waag, *A Military History of Modern South Africa*, 182. Van der Waag suggests numbers reaching 2000 interns in total. However, Hancock indicates that the figures he gives are the maximum number of internments at a given date. Given that some interns were interned for long durations, and the maximum number of interns was in 31 July 1944 at 582, it is possible that 2000 may be too generous. See also A La Grange, ‘Die impak van die Unie van Suid-Afrika se noodregulasies op die Ossewa- Brandwag teen die agtergrond van Suid-Afrika se deelname aan die Tweede Wêreldoorlog, 1939-1948’ (MA Dissertation, North West University, 2020) for the OB experience of internment.

<sup>316</sup> Orpen, *East African and Abyssinian Campaigns*, 346–47; Hartshorn, *Avenge Tobruk*, 225–33.

<sup>317</sup> Birkby, *The Saga of the Transvaal Scottish*, 35.

<sup>318</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *South African Jews in World War Two*, 10–11.

<sup>319</sup> M Cardo, ‘Fighting a Worse Imperialism’: White South African Loyalism and the Army Education Services (AES) during the Second World War’, *South African Historical Journal*, 46, no. 1 (2002), 147; Malherbe, *Never a Dull Moment*, 215.



war. Malherbe felt that “soldiers should know not only know what they were fighting against, but also what they were fighting for...”<sup>320</sup> The scheme trained hand-picked personnel and deployed them with the combat forces.<sup>321</sup> Exploiting the opportunity provided by military discipline, to shape the opinion of these soldiers away from political extremism,<sup>322</sup> the training had a distinct liberal-leaning.<sup>323</sup> The objective was to ensure commitment to the war while simultaneously exploiting the ideals of fighting Nazism and Fascism to engender values required for a more equitable society.<sup>324</sup> After the war, Malherbe proudly reported that his survey had detected a tendency, in the change of attitude towards the South African Blacks, among White soldiers from “one of blind intolerance to one of understanding and tolerance”.<sup>325</sup>

Soon after mobilisation had commenced, ordinary soldiers, wary of broken government promises from the First World War, and distrustful of officialdom, began organising numerous debating societies and interest groups. One of these debating societies was formed in early 1941 by men of the 9 Reconnaissance Battalion of the South African Tank Corps at the Kafferskraal training camp near Klerksdorp. By mid-1941, two similar soldiers’ groups were formed. One was the Soldiers’ Interests Committee formed by members of the 1 South African Brigade (1 SA Bde) in Addis Ababa. The other was the Union of Soldiers, which was also created in Egypt by soldiers of the same Brigade. Over the following months, representatives of these three groups established contact with one another and met on occasion to discuss various issues and concerns that related to servicemen. The outcome of these discussions was the merger of the three organisations to form the Springbok Legion (SL) of Soldiers in Johannesburg in December 1941 as the premier soldiers’ organisation.<sup>326</sup>

The SL, politicised from its inception, sought to look after the interests of all South African Soldiers (both White and Black, male and female).<sup>327</sup> The Legion was initially placed under the leadership of Warrant Officer Jock Isacowitz, a former leftist student activist at the University of Witwatersrand (Wits). He became quite influential during the Legion’s early years as later chapters will show.<sup>328</sup> The objectives of the AES and SL enticed many communists who had joined the UDF, especially after Germany had invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941.<sup>329</sup> By 1944, barely three years since the Legion’s formation, its membership peaked at between 50 000 and 60 000 members. Considering

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<sup>320</sup> Malherbe, 215.

<sup>321</sup> Monama, ‘Wartime Propaganda In the Union of South Africa 1939-1945’, 224.

<sup>322</sup> Roos, ‘Education, Sex and Leisure’, 814.

<sup>323</sup> Malherbe, *Never a Dull Moment*, 217; Joseph, *Side by Side*, 26.

<sup>324</sup> Roos, ‘Education, Sex and Leisure’, 814; Cardo, ‘Fighting a Worse Imperialism’, 149–51.

<sup>325</sup> Malherbe, ‘Race Attitudes and Education’, 6.

<sup>326</sup> Lazerson, *Against the Tide*, 54; Roos, *Ordinary Springboks*, 87; SAHA, AL2460, ‘Interview with F Carneson by J Fredrikse’.

<sup>327</sup> Roos, *Ordinary Springboks*, 87.

<sup>328</sup> Lambert, ‘Their Finest Hour?’, 78; Lazerson, *Against the Tide*, 58; Roos, *Ordinary Springboks*, 53, 93, 86.

<sup>329</sup> Lambert, ‘Their Finest Hour?’, 78; Lazerson, *Against the Tide*, 58; Roos, *Ordinary Springboks*, 53, 93, 86.

that this figure was almost a quarter of all White South African volunteers as well as more than the number of men who actually served at the time, the deduction can be made that the Legion was successful during its early years in attracting support from a diverse group of soldiers with different political views.<sup>330</sup>

It was not only the ordinary soldiers in the 1 SA Bde who were contemplating the post-war political environment but the higher-ranking commanders as well. During the Abyssinian campaign, the brigade commander, Brigadier Daniel (Dan) Pienaar, soon took his officers into his confidence around the campfire. As kindred spirits, they spent much of their free time debating and arguing over politics. Concerned about the inevitable frustrations to be borne out of demobilisation, Pienaar envisioned a Soldier's Party to smooth the transition to peace. Wishful plans were developed, which included a 'shadow cabinet' and an assessment of possible funders from the officers and men of the Brigade, many of them wealthy. However, these plans died with the originators, as the war claimed Pienaar, then everyone else involved, sparing only Eric (Scrubs) Hartshorn, who remained to reminisce over an idea stillborn.<sup>331</sup>

### 1.3.3 Military campaigns

South Africa's participation in landward operations is grouped into two distinct periods: the African campaigns (1940-1943) and the Italian campaign (1944-1945). The 1943 elections separated them. The Madagascar campaign in 1942, the air war, and the naval campaigns were ancillary to these. Furthermore, South African involvement in the war was significantly broader than just the UDF participation, as many South Africans had either joined or were seconded to the British Armed Forces as well.

Italy entered the war in support of Germany, in June 1940, which provided Smuts with an argument to push South African soldiers into the fight. Commonwealth forces, mobilised from as far afield as Kenya, Uganda, Somaliland, Gold Coast (Ghana), Zanzibar, Tanganyika (Tanzania), Nigeria, Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), South Africa and India could now be concentrated in defence of Kenya, and for the later invasion of Abyssinia.<sup>332</sup> SAAF squadrons were already in Mombasa, and the 1 SA Bde embarked almost immediately to join the concentrating forces from throughout Africa. The rest of the 1 South African Division (1 SA Div) joined them shortly afterwards. In August 1940, Italy quickly overran British and French positions in Djibouti and Somaliland, making the British commander, Major General Douglas Dickinson, unenthusiastic about offensive operations. Dickinson further antagonised Brink and Pienaar by attempting to dilute the South African brigades into the 11 and 12 African Divisions. Such an arrangement would have

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<sup>330</sup> J Hyslop, 'Anti-Fascism in South Africa 1933-1945 and its Legacies', in K Braskén, N Copsey, and DJ Featherstone (eds.), *Anti-Fascism in a Global Perspective: Transnational Networks, Exile Communities, and Radical Internationalism* (London: Routledge, 2020).

<sup>331</sup> Hartshorn, *Avenge Tobruk*, 31–39.

<sup>332</sup> Orpen, *East African and Abyssinian Campaigns*, 346-351.

undermined Smuts politically in South Africa where the Afrikaner nationalists were arguing for more segregation of races.<sup>333</sup> Smuts, not shy of a fight, forcefully addressed the issue in October 1940. In a conference with Dickinson, Smuts berated him: "You are no General for me. I did not send my young men to die of fever in East Africa. I sent them to drive the enemy out of Africa".<sup>334</sup> On 29 October 1940, Smuts returned to Nairobi from a meeting with Anthony Eden, the British Secretary for War, who had brought with him Dickinson's successor, Lieutenant General Alan Cunningham.<sup>335</sup>

The East African force of the 11 and 12 African Divisions and 1 SA Div, started the offensive with a successful raid on El Wak on 16 December 1940. They soon swept through Somaliland into Abyssinia, reaching Addis Ababa by 6 April 1941. The advance had covered over 2 000 km in 53 days.<sup>336</sup> The rapid collapse of the Italian forces posed a new challenge to the East African Force, which now had to protect their erstwhile White enemy (and civilians) from the marauding Abyssinians wanting to affect revenge.<sup>337</sup> After the capture of Addis Ababa, and Dessie, the 1 SA Bde cleared the road through Amba Alagi from the South. Prince Amedeo, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Duke of Aosta, had taken defensive positions in the mountainous redoubt, in an attempt to prevent the linking up of Allied forces between Addis Ababa and Eritrea.<sup>338</sup> The 1 SA Bde began the assault on Amba Alagi on 11 May 1941,<sup>339</sup> and by 18 May 1941, the Duke of Aosta ceremoniously surrendered.<sup>340</sup> The forces in East Africa, which comprised mainly African soldiers, had provided the Allies with their first major land victory of the war.<sup>341</sup>

After the fall of Amba Alagi, Defence Headquarters in Pretoria decided to withdraw the 1 SA Div from East Africa.<sup>342</sup> By 4 May 1941, Major General Brink had established the 1 SA Divisional headquarters at Amaruya in Egypt, with the responsibility for preparing a defensive line to block enemy approaches towards the Suez Canal.<sup>343</sup> With the 1 SA Bde arriving at Mersah Matruh, on the 24 June 1941, the 1 SA Div was whole again.<sup>344</sup> At the same time, the 2 South African Division (2 SA Div), under command of Major General Isaac de Villiers was concentrating forces at Mareopolis near Alexandria and was made responsible for preparing positions around El Alamein.<sup>345</sup> The two South African Divisions now formed part of the 8 British Army.<sup>346</sup> By this stage in the war, the South African

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<sup>333</sup> Hartshorn, *Avenge Tobruk*, 41–42; Birkby, *Uncle George*, 99.

<sup>334</sup> Hartshorn, *Avenge Tobruk*, 45; Birkby, *Uncle George*, 100.

<sup>335</sup> C Birkby, *Springbok Victory* (Johannesburg: Libertas Publications, 1941), 69.

<sup>336</sup> Stapleton, *A Military History of South Africa*, 140; Orpen, *East African and Abyssinian Campaigns*, 251.

<sup>337</sup> Orpen, *East African and Abyssinian Campaigns*, 252–53.

<sup>338</sup> Stapleton, *A Military History of South Africa*, 140.

<sup>339</sup> Hartshorn, *Avenge Tobruk*, 73.

<sup>340</sup> Orpen, *East African and Abyssinian Campaigns*, 312.

<sup>341</sup> Stapleton, *A Military History of South Africa*, 140.

<sup>342</sup> Orpen, *East African and Abyssinian Campaigns*, 314.

<sup>343</sup> ND Orpen, *War in the Desert South African Forces World War II (Volume III)* (Cape Town: Purnell & Sons, 1971), 7.

<sup>344</sup> Hartshorn, *Avenge Tobruk*, 78; Orpen, *War in the Desert*, 18.

<sup>345</sup> Hartshorn, *Avenge Tobruk*, 78; Orpen, *War in the Desert*, 18, 40.

<sup>346</sup> Orpen, *War in the Desert*, 34.

divisions struggled endlessly to secure sufficient reinforcements and vehicles needed to reach combat status.

By November 1941 the 1 SA div, understaffed, undertrained and underequipped was reluctantly drawn into Operation CRUSADER.<sup>347</sup> Despite a heroic stand in defence of Sidi Rezegh, where the 5 South African Brigade (5 SA Bde) extracted a heavy toll on the advancing Germans, effectively “cutting the heart out” of the German 15 Panzer Division, the Brigade was overrun and annihilated on 23 November 1941.<sup>348</sup> The 1 SA Bde’s cautious behaviour saved it and the 1 SA Div from total destruction. At the same time, the 2 SA Div, as part of XIII Corps, played a dominant role in the capture of Bardia, Sollum and Halfaya.<sup>349</sup> Colonel Hendrik Klopper was instrumental in the planning of the attack on Bardia which bagged 8 000 prisoners of war, which included General Helmut Schmitt, the first German general to be captured by Allied forces.<sup>350</sup>

The disaster of Sidi Rezegh was soon overshadowed by an even greater calamity eight months later in June 1942. The 2 SA Div, under the command of the now Major General Klopper, was cut off and isolated in Tobruk by Rommel’s much-anticipated counteroffensive. The newly-promoted Klopper, surrendered when the Germans breached the fortress’s perimeter, leading almost 35 000 Allied forces, including the 2 SA Div of 10 722 South Africans, into captivity.<sup>351</sup> The 8 British Army was able to halt Rommel’s advance into Egypt at El Alamein in July and August 1942. It took Lieutenant General Bernard Montgomery of the 8 British Army until 12 November 1942 to recapture Tobruk and another month to clear Libya of German Forces. The 1 SA Div, having served well in the 8 British Army, was returned to the Union of South Africa at the beginning of 1943.<sup>352</sup>

Smuts, digesting the ‘lessons’ of the North African campaign, was eager to recommit South African forces to the fight. On 1 February 1943, Major General Evered Poole took command of the newly formed 6 South African Armoured Division (6 SA Armd Div).<sup>353</sup> The formation of the division allowed Smuts to secure modern tanks from the British,<sup>354</sup> allowing South Africa to field a division despite personnel shortages, as an Armour Division had a smaller personnel establishment table. To deploy the division outside Africa, to Italy, the soldiers swore a new oath, the General Service Oath, to serve outside Africa known as the ‘Blue Oath’. Staffing the new division occurred in almost typical South African fashion.<sup>355</sup> With total disregard to esprit de corps, the formation of the new division required

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<sup>347</sup> Orpen, *War in the Desert*, 36–37.

<sup>348</sup> Katz, *South Africans versus Rommel*, 141.

<sup>349</sup> Van der Waag, *A Military History of Modern South Africa*, 199.

<sup>350</sup> Katz, *South Africans versus Rommel*, 159.

<sup>351</sup> Van der Waag, *A Military History of Modern South Africa*, 199.

<sup>352</sup> Van der Waag, 119.

<sup>353</sup> Van der Waag, 207.

<sup>354</sup> Van der Waag, 207.

<sup>355</sup> In the First World War forces raised for the German South West African Campaign were disbanded after the successful campaign and soldiers had to re-join for the German East Africa Campaign and the Western Front. South African Scottish units battled for many years to get WW I battle honours allocated. In the 1950s and again in 2019 these units faced “extinction” due to political ambition.

the breaking-up of the returning 1 SA Div.<sup>356</sup> Many ACF units, which could not raise sufficient soldiers, were linked together into composite units.<sup>357</sup>

The victory in North Africa, after the calamitous start at Sidi Rezegh and Tobruk, set the pro-German opposition in South Africa into disarray.<sup>358</sup> Smuts, seizing the opportunity, called for an election on 17 July 1943. In order to seal his victory, he pushed through legislation allowing soldiers on 'foreign service' to vote, despite vigorous opposition from the NP, and especially from FC Erasmus, the NP's Defence spokesman.<sup>359</sup> In the end, the 'soldiers vote' only decided in 12 constituencies of which ten favoured the UP, one LP and one Dominion Party.<sup>360</sup> The UP returned to Parliament with an enlarged majority of 110. Almost unnoticed, the NP had increased its representation by one seat to 43, and the smaller Afrikaner nationalist parties (*Nuwe Orde* and Afrikaner Party) failed to capture any seats. Afrikaner support for the UP had also shrunk from 40 per cent to around 32 per cent during this election.<sup>361</sup> The NP's performance signalled the start of the consolidation of Afrikaner nationalism into a disciplined bloc behind DF Malan.<sup>362</sup> Erasmus was instrumental in this reorganisation and repositioning of the NP, work that would bear fruit after the war.

In April 1943, the 6 SA Armd Div established itself in Egypt at Khatatba, some 100 km from Cairo, to prepare for the Italian campaign. After a year of exhaustive training, the division transferred to the Altamura-Matera-Gravina area in Italy.<sup>363</sup> It soon became apparent that the Italian theatre was totally unlike the flat, hot, dry, and sparsely populated deserts of North Africa. Italy was mountainous, wet in spring, icy cold in winter and densely populated. Furthermore, the enemy was well entrenched and willing to fight.<sup>364</sup>

In May 1944, the division moved forward to assist the British and US forces in their assault against the Gustav Line, at Monte Cassino. After that, the South Africans met light resistance as the Allies swept into Rome on 6 June 1944. It took eight weeks of hard fighting for the South Africans to liberate Florence on 4 August 1944. There they took a six-week rest to refit and overhaul their equipment. On 22 August 1944, they were placed under the command of the 5 US Army and the task to push the Germans back on the Gothic Line to Pistoia fell on the 6 SA Armd Div. By February 1945, they had pushed the Germans back as far as the Apennines when they were relieved and moved to Lucca

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<sup>356</sup> Van der Waag, *A Military History of Modern South Africa*, 205; Martin and Orpen, *South Africa at War*, 226.

<sup>357</sup> Martin and Orpen, *South Africa at War*, 233.

<sup>358</sup> Van der Waag, *A Military History of Modern South Africa*, 203.

<sup>359</sup> Van der Waag, *A Military History of Modern South Africa*, 205; FD Tothill, 'The Soldiers' Vote and Its Effect on the Outcome of the South African General Election of 1943', *South African Historical Journal*, 21, no. 1 (1989), 75.

<sup>360</sup> Tothill, 'The Soldiers' Vote', 83; Department of Defence Archive Repository (hereafter DOD Archive), Adjutant General (3)154, Box 78, 'General Election, 1943 Ninth Parliament of the Union of South Africa'. Boulter, 'FC Erasmus and the Politics of South African Defence 1948-1959', 17.

<sup>361</sup> Van der Waag, *A Military History of Modern South Africa*, 206; White, 'The South African Parliamentary Opposition, 1948-1953' 10.

<sup>362</sup> Van der Waag, *A Military History of Modern South Africa*, 207.

<sup>363</sup> Van der Waag, 207-9.



for reorganisation. The eventual collapse of the German front, in April 1945, allowed the 6 SA Armd Div to be employed in its armour role, as the Allies pursued the retreating Germans across the Italian plains towards Venice. As the 6 SA Armd Div entered Milan on 2 May 1945, German forces in Italy announced their surrender. The remainder of the campaign contrasted significantly with previous events as South African soldiers faced the agonisingly slow repatriation and demobilisation process.<sup>365</sup>

The Italian campaign made a different impression on the ordinary soldier compared to their experiences in Africa. The most pertinent difference was the density of the population, their proximity to and their interaction with the South African soldier. In North Africa, the battlefield was unpopulated, and during training, the South Africans were billeted far outside Cairo. South African authorities were thereby able to exercise a fair degree of control over the soldiers' contact with the local population. Soldiers were allowed limited visits to the sights and experiences of Egypt, usually only after extensive 'hygiene' education.<sup>366</sup>

In contrast, fighting in Italy often took place among the population. The proximity to the Italian population exposed South Africans to the suffering of the Italian peasantry. The class struggle rhetoric found credence among the radicalised soldiers. In many cases, the soldiers with communist sympathies, especially those who had joined after Hitler had declared war on the Soviet Union, made contact with local communist political parties. During the campaign, soldiers befriended Italian girls, and with the relaxation of regulations at the end of the war, this behaviour became more prevalent. Relations between soldiers and the Italian population resulted in over 572 wives, 30 children and 31 fiancées being repatriated to South Africa from Italy after the war.<sup>367</sup> The South African soldiers who returned from Italy were, in many cases, deeply moved by the human cost war exacted on civilians.

#### 1.3.4 End of war

At the end of the war, South Africa had deployed 342 692 volunteers in uniformed service. Of the 132 194 White male soldiers, the majority served in the Army. Of those that had served elsewhere, 44 569 had served in the SAAF and 9 455 in the South African Naval Force (SANF), which, in August 1942, amalgamated the earlier Seaward Defence Force (SDF) and the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve (South Africa) (RNVR(SA)). Of the men as mentioned above, 6 215 had lost their lives, and more than 14 583 had been prisoners of war. At least one in ten servicemen had become a casualty in the war.<sup>368</sup>

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<sup>365</sup> Van der Waag, *A Military History of Modern South Africa*, 206–10.

<sup>366</sup> G Bentz, 'At the Fleshpots of Egypt: The Battle for Control of the Morality of South African Troops in North Africa during the Second World War' (South African Historical Society (SAHS) 23<sup>rd</sup> Biennial Conference, 2011), 4.

<sup>367</sup> Van der Waag, *A Military History of Modern South Africa*, 213.

<sup>368</sup> Martin and Orpen, *South Africa at War*, 346–247. A more detailed breakdown of the forces is provided.

Along with the losses, South African soldiers served with distinction. The 'medal count' for the soldiers included three Victoria Crosses (VC), 14 Companions of the Order of the Bath (CB), 41 Commanders of the Order of the British Empire (CBE), 108 Distinguished Service Orders (DSO), 147 Officers of the Order of the British Empire (OBE), 363 Members of the Order of the British Empire (MBE), 37 Distinguished Service Crosses (DSC), 335 Military Crosses (MC), 429 Distinguished Flying Crosses (DFC), one Conspicuous Gallantry Medal (CGM), 535 Military Medals (MM), and over 3 800 mentions in dispatches (MID).<sup>369</sup> These figures exclude awards to South Africans that served outside of the UDF and foreign medals and decorations.

After the war, the rapidly expanded wartime UDF faced demobilisation and reform. The Army reactivated the ACF, which now comprised 23 Infantry Regiments, new Anti-Aircraft Regiments, and reinvigorated Field Artillery regiments. In most cases, units with long histories were retained, with few being re-designated as artillery. The availability of war equipment ensured that these units were well-armed, and even allowed for the formation of a Permanent Force armour capability. The ACF was fortunate to be able to mitigate the declining post-war enthusiasm for military service, with a core of battle-hardened and experienced officers and NCOs.<sup>370</sup>

The SAAF had emerged from the war substantially strengthened and better organised. Combat requirements had replaced obsolete aircraft with modern aircraft. The Joint Air Training Scheme had trained over 12 221 pilots and aircrew for the SAAF, and the close co-operation with the British Royal Air Force (RAF) had resulted in the SAAF developing a distinct culture and expertise that separated it from the SA Army. The SAAF had become a capable fighting force with over 28 Squadrons.<sup>371</sup>

The SANF as the Cinderella force also experienced expansion. From a force that had barely existed before the war, it now boasted three frigates, two Boom defence vessels and eleven Harbour motor launches. The SANF retained a Permanent Force complement of 866 from a wartime strength of over 8090 officers and men.<sup>372</sup>

Brink headed the difficult job of demobilisation supported by a staff of some 6 000 men and women. The process of repatriation and demobilisation was long and complicated and did not transpire without complaints and problems. The scale of the project was astounding with the financial cost amounting to 41 000 000 pounds. Approximately 245 668 soldiers passed through the dispersal depots, with 155 330 placed into positions of employment.<sup>373</sup>

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<sup>369</sup> Martin and Orpen, *South Africa at War*, 347.

<sup>370</sup> Martin and Orpen, 347–248.

<sup>371</sup> Martin and Orpen, 348.

<sup>372</sup> Martin and Orpen, 349.

<sup>373</sup> Martin and Orpen, 356.



## 1.4 POSTWAR YEARS

### 1.4.1 Post war expectations

There was hope that participation in the war would allow for the construction of a more equitable post-war world order.<sup>374</sup> Jan Hofmeyr, Smuts's deputy and a prominent liberal in the UP, initiated liberal wartime reforms.<sup>375</sup> During the war, Smuts, distracted by the international war effort, gave these liberal elements substantial latitude to implement their policies.<sup>376</sup> Smuts further voiced support for the liberals when he acknowledged, in a speech at the SA Institute for Race Relations (SAIRR) on 21 January 1942, known as the 'Segregation has fallen on Evil Days' speech, that Black urbanisation was irreversible and that a policy urban racial segregation would become impossible to implement in the future.<sup>377</sup> Thus, liberals perceived that Smuts's government would continue to pursue liberal reforms after the war.

Internationally, the war had popularised liberal values, such as individualism, the rule of law, and self-determination. These values, propagated by Churchill and Roosevelt in the Atlantic Charter of 14 August 1941, had started to filter into the broader South African political stream. Smuts's involvement in the drafting of the UN Charter further increased domestic expectations for a more equitable society within South Africa.<sup>378</sup> Smuts himself acknowledged this on his return from the UN in 1946:

The fully publicised discussion at UNO [Smuts wrote this on his return] are having a great effect in all directions. We even hear about them from our domestic and farm Natives [*sic.*] who really have nothing to complain of, but are deeply stirred by all this talk of equality and non-discrimination.... ..but it is even more difficult now in the view of these Native claims which have just the opposite effect on European mentality. Both extremes are gathering strength.<sup>379</sup>

In 1947, Smuts continued to tussle with the challenge of balancing African and Indian rights and white dominance: In a letter to Margaret Gillett on 6 February he confided:

Mrs Ballinger said the other day in parliament that in social and economic advances we have a strong case, but the Native want *rights* and not improvements. There we bump up against the claim for equality which is most difficult to satisfy except in very small doses which will not satisfy the leaders. I have so far done my best to follow the other line (of improvements) as less open to white prejudice and opposition. I must try again.<sup>380</sup>

Liberals were confident that South Africa was on an irreversible path of urbanisation and industrialisation. Growing urbanisation, it was hoped, would then generate further liberal political

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<sup>374</sup> Dubow, 'Uncovering the Historic Strands of Egalitarian Liberalism in South Africa', 14.

<sup>375</sup> Lazerson, *Against the Tide*, 54.

<sup>376</sup> Lazerson, 54.

<sup>377</sup> Hyslop, 'Segregation Has Fallen on Evil Days', 439; Lazerson, *Against the Tide*, 54.

<sup>378</sup> Everatt, *The Origins of Non-Racialism*, 11.

<sup>379</sup> Hancock, *Smuts: The Fields of Force*, 286.

<sup>380</sup> Hancock, 481.

reforms. They were thus confident that gradual liberalism would inform post-war governmental policy.<sup>381</sup>

After the war, the SL continued to pursue an agenda of non-racial social justice.<sup>382</sup> The Legion's position appealed to the politically leftist ex-servicemen who progressively took over the leadership of the Legion.<sup>383</sup> The ease with which the chairman could co-opt new members onto the committee facilitated the gradual loading of the National Executive Committee (NEC) with communist sympathisers.<sup>384</sup> However, the Legion's NEC was still careful not to favour the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) and when approached by the CPSA in 1945 to discuss a pamphlet, proposed instead to "...invite representatives of the United Party, Labour Party, Dominion Party, and Communist Party, to address the NEC, on their policy with particular regard to their Fascist struggle."<sup>385</sup>

As ex-servicemen returned to the workplace, the soldiers lost the incentive to support the SL. Furthermore, the SL's vocal leftist leanings may have also caused less radical or politically inclined ex-servicemen to withdraw from the SL.<sup>386</sup> In 1947, despite declining support, the SL still had enough influence for the Labour Party (LP) to approach it to provide candidates in the 1948 elections. The SL also believed that it could still influence the nomination of more progressive candidates in the LP and UP and assisted by providing election volunteers to both parties.<sup>387</sup> On 14 December 1947, in a SL NEC meeting, the Chairman of the SL, Isacowitz, anticipating Smuts's death, predicted the future tensions that the UP would experience.

Sooner or later General Smuts will retire, thereby precipitating a re-alignment of forces in the House. Reactionary United Party members may very well ally themselves with the Nationalists: liberal United Party members would stand firm by the United Party, possibly under the leadership of a man like Mr. Hofmeyr. To that end we should press for the nominations of candidates, who would be likely to align themselves with the 'liberal' group. Until such a re-orientation takes place, the presence in the House of a strong progressive group will influence legislation in a direction acceptable to the Springbok Legion.<sup>388</sup>

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<sup>381</sup> Everatt, *The Origins of Non-Racialism*, 26–27.

<sup>382</sup> Roos, *Ordinary Springboks*, 159.

<sup>383</sup> Roos, 137.

<sup>384</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A617, Springbok Legion, 'Minutes of a Meeting of the National Executive Committee Held at Main House, Main Street, Johannesburg on Sat 30 June, 1945 at 2:30 pm', On the 30 Jun 1945 meeting Mr O'Meara, Caraker, Bunting and Carneson were co-opted onto the NEC.

<sup>385</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A617, Springbok Legion, 'Minutes of a Meeting of the National Executive Committee Held at Main House, Main Street, Johannesburg on Saturday 3rd February 1945, 2:30. pm'.

<sup>386</sup> Lazerson, *Against the Tide*, 53.

<sup>387</sup> White, 'The South African Parliamentary Opposition, 1948-1953', 27.

<sup>388</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A617, Springbok Legion, 'Special National Executive Conference Held at Progress Buildings, Commissioner Street, Johannesburg on Sunday, 14th December 1947'.

Furthermore, the SL encouraged its legionaries to “join and work in the political party of their choice”.<sup>389</sup> Such political work for the UP and LP would hopefully induce inactive legionaries to take on the work of the SL in the future.<sup>390</sup>

The devastating electoral defeat for the UP in 1948 marked a dramatic change in the political landscape of South Africa. Colin Eglin, an ex-serviceman, who had joined the UP after the 1948 elections, expressed the prevailing sentiment of those in support of Smuts in the war:

I had been a 19-year-old soldier in the war, and to me the NP was almost an extension of Hitler's party ... It may not have been, but they were backing Germany. Most of my associates were ex-servicemen and the election of the NP touched a chord among those who had been fighting Fascism and Nazism - there was a profound sense of shock, of unreality.<sup>391</sup>

Barry White argues that “most ex-servicemen were emotionally bound together by the shared experience of military victory and, soon after demobilisation, by the experience of a tacit political defeat”.<sup>392</sup> The UP election defeat disrupted the ex-servicemen's sense of belonging within the political sphere.<sup>393</sup> The Anglo-Afrikaner social hierarchy which they fought to preserve was overturned by a political grouping that openly pursued narrow Afrikaner nationalism, and had associated with the fascism during the war. One ex-serviceman felt that “When the Nats came to power it seemed as though they were taking away the freedom we actually fought for.”<sup>394</sup>

An almost apocalyptic sentiment developed among the ex-servicemen that the Nationalists were dragging the country backwards in time:

It was a disaster, you know, I'm saying now what I thought all along. The day they had that 1948 election and the South African Party lost to the Nationalists, we stood in the office, at the office and we had one Afrikaans-speaking chap and he was, he was doubtful, but the rest of us, and there was one major, who'd been a major in the Cape Town Highlanders, his words that day were, 'This has put the country back 40 years'.<sup>395</sup>

These feelings ran deep, especially since the war was legitimised globally and locally as not only a war against Germany, Italy or Japan but also a war against fascism.<sup>396</sup> The NP's wartime flirtation with fascism placed it in conflict with such sentiment. At a less articulated level, the purpose of the war in the minds of many was being re-conceptualised in broader, more positivist terms, to that of a

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<sup>389</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A617, Springbok Legion, 'Special National Executive Conference Held at Progress Buildings, Commissioner Street, Johannesburg on Sunday, 14th December 1947'.

<sup>390</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A617, Springbok Legion, 'Special National Executive Conference Held at Progress Buildings, Commissioner Street, Johannesburg on Sunday, 14th December 1947'.

<sup>391</sup> *Mail and Guardian*, 'The Days the Nats Rose Up' (1998) Available: <https://mg.co.za/article/1998-05-22-the-day-the-nats-rose-up> [Accessed: 2 September 2019].

<sup>392</sup> White, 'The South African Parliamentary Opposition, 1948-1953', 260.

<sup>393</sup> Greenbank, 'You Chaps Mustn't Worry When You Come Back', 24.

<sup>394</sup> Greenbank, 24.

<sup>395</sup> Greenbank, 131.

<sup>396</sup> Du Toit, 'The National Committee for Liberation ('ARM') 1960-1964: Sabotage and the Question of the Ideological Subject', 54.

war for freedom, democracy and human rights.<sup>397</sup> The political discourse in the Black communities also reflected this broadening interpretation:

If a new beginning is to be made, if the foundation of the peaceful world is to be secure, then the scourge of Hitlerite tyranny must be uprooted not only in Europe but also in South Africa and every corner of the globe.<sup>398</sup>

Despite the apparent shock at the NP's victory, Smuts had received forewarning.<sup>399</sup> He, however, had demurred against changing the loading of rural electoral constituencies that was so disadvantageous to the UP, as he held the belief that the rural constituencies would not fail him.<sup>400</sup> Even after the election, he had opposed the formation of a coalition government with the Afrikaner Party of Klasie Havenga who was a loyal Hertzogite despite pleas from Malherbe and others to consider it.<sup>401</sup> Furthermore, career politicians in the UP, many who had served in the war, initially saw the NP victory as a minor setback. However, after the death of both Hofmeyr, Smuts's heir apparent in the UP, in 1948 and Smuts in 1950, the UP realised that the NP had no intention of relinquishing power again.

#### 1.4.2 Opposition to NP government

Once the UP had realised that the NP had no intention to relinquish power, and began implementing their policy of Apartheid, the White opposition faced the challenge of removing the NP from government. The following section unpacks how the ex-servicemen rallied against the NP government, and how the ex-serviceman identity became instrumental in the construction of a unified front against the NP.

For the radicals of the SL, the UP loss was dire. They had, within the SL, worked for a UP victory in 1948, aware of the dangers inherent in the NP victory. Legislation introduced by the NP, such as the Suppression of Communism Act of 1950, which banned the CPSA and limited activists in both the White and Black opposition outraged the radicals.<sup>402</sup> Apart from the radical legionnaires, many ex-servicemen mobilised against the NP, more out of anger over the NPs rehabilitation of pro-Nazi sympathisers such as Robey Leibbrandt in 1948, than out of dislike for the NP policies.<sup>403</sup>

For the English-speakers, especially in Natal, the talk of reconciliation by DF Malan, did not soften the excesses of the military reforms by Erasmus, the newly appointed Defence minister since

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<sup>397</sup> Du Toit, 'The National Committee for Liberation', 54; Lazerson, *Against the Tide*, 54.

<sup>398</sup> Non European Unity Movement, *A Declaration to the Nations of the World* (1945).

<sup>399</sup> Graaff, *Div Looks Back*, 124; Barlow, *That We May Tread Safely*, 68; Wits Historical Papers, A2521aa, Interviews by Everatt, 'Interview with Piet Beyleveld by David Everatt'.

<sup>400</sup> Malherbe, *Never a Dull Moment*, 282.

<sup>401</sup> Malherbe, *Never a Dull Moment*, 282; Barlow, *That We May Tread Safely*, 92–95.

<sup>402</sup> R Davies, D O'Meara, and S Dlamini, *The Struggle for South Africa: A Reference Guide to Movements, Organisations and Institutions Volume One* (Bath: The Pitman Press, 1984), 21.

<sup>403</sup> Greenbank, 'You Chaps Mustn't Worry When You Come Back', 142.

1948.<sup>404</sup> Furthermore, the exclusion of English-speakers from the Cabinet, the inclusion of various pro-Nazi factions into NP ranks and the rehabilitation of Nazi sympathisers further exacerbated concerns held by English-speakers.<sup>405</sup> The layering of English-speaking interests, South Africanism, a sense of waning South African influence in the Commonwealth, and strong Afrikaner antagonism towards all things British, meant that the English community was almost uniformly opposed to the NP. For them, being so openly excluded from political power was distasteful and was “almost as harsh as the NP’s rigid exclusion of Africans from the privileges of citizenship”.<sup>406</sup>

The NP also did not intend to accommodate the left-wing radicals, liberals or the English-speakers. On a political-philosophical level, the Nationalist leaders had embraced and adapted the theological ideas of Abraham Kuyper, which provided divine justification for Apartheid or separate development on a grand scale.<sup>407</sup> The divine ordination of their political project did not merely provide a counter to the perspectives of the liberal and socialist left but instead attempted to refute them outright. Tracy Kuyperus observes, “It would be a direct contradiction of the revealed will of God to plead for a commonality between Whites, Coloureds and Blacks”.<sup>408</sup> Based on such views, the NP’s implementation of separatist policies was justified as God-ordained and racial integration a sin.<sup>409</sup> Even when the NP engaged with other political formations, the nationalists were unable even to consider alternative positions. The leader of the NP, DF Malan, made this clear when claiming victory stating “...today South Africa belongs to us once more. South Africa is our own for the first time since Union, and may God grant it will always remain our own.”<sup>410</sup> Erasmus later similarly echoed this sentiment when referring to the Second Anglo Boer War saying “... we lost the second war of independence but step by step we have won the peace.”<sup>411</sup>

The NP victory came from the party’s ability to fuse the Afrikaner into one coherent national identity. The interests of Afrikaner rural and urban capital, Afrikaner Intelligentsia, and Afrikaner worker interests, were brought together in an election campaign based on not only the vague promise of Apartheid but also a position of Anti-Imperialism, and Anti-Capitalism.<sup>412</sup> Arguing the need to counter increased wartime Black urbanisation and the softening of the colour bar, the NP sold Apartheid as necessary for the survival of the whole White community.<sup>413</sup> Nevertheless, in the 1950s inter-racial tensions had not completely eclipsed the internal divisions among the Afrikaner and English-

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<sup>404</sup> RS Boulter, “Afrikaner Nationalism in Action: F. C. Erasmus and South Africa’s Defence Forces 1948-1959,” *Nations and Nationalism*, 6, no. 3 (2000), 443–49.

<sup>405</sup> White, ‘The South African Parliamentary Opposition, 1948-1953’, 74.

<sup>406</sup> Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 492.

<sup>407</sup> P Baskwell, ‘Kuyper and Apartheid: A Revisiting’, *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies*, 62, no. 4 (2006), 1273.

<sup>408</sup> Baskwell, 1280.

<sup>409</sup> Baskwell, 1280.

<sup>410</sup> Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 487.

<sup>411</sup> H Gibbs, *Twilight in South Africa*, 194.

<sup>412</sup> Davies, O’Meara, and Dlamini, *The Struggle for South Africa Volume One*, 20.

<sup>413</sup> Welsh, *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid*, 22; Davenport, *South Africa: A Modern History*, 323; Davies, O’Meara, and Dlamini, *The Struggle for South Africa Volume One*, 20.

speaking Whites.<sup>414</sup> The NP exploited anti-British sentiment to divide the White race along linguistic-cultural lines, thereby securing the support of the Afrikaner *Volk*.<sup>415</sup> The *Volkseenheid* (national unity) was required to guarantee the survival of the White race,<sup>416</sup> and to place the Afrikaner on social and economic parity with the Anglophone community. With most of its support coming from the White Afrikaans working class, the outcome of the 1948 election was not only a cultural victory but also a class victory, for the Afrikaner Nationalist. Within the White community, the 1948 election marked the start of a cultural and social revolution within the White community which left the more affluent 'South Africanist' support base devoid of political power.<sup>417</sup>

The frustration and anger within the South African opposition circles converged when the NP began undermining the constitution in 1951, in order to remove the Coloureds from the voter's role. Dönges, the Minister of Justice, on 10 June 1948 fired the first salvo in the NP's war to reduce non-white rights when he moved to repeal Part II of the 1946 Asiatic Land Tenure and Representation Act. The act had made provision for Indian parliamentary representation.<sup>418</sup> The issue divided the UP who were unable to stop the motion. Smuts conceded that '[native] Coloureds and Indians have been under constant attack and we in the opposition have not been able to ward off the blows struck against those who cannot defend themselves.'<sup>419</sup>

The ease of the NP's initial success fortified them for the greater task of changing the constitution. The Act of Union of 1910 had two entrenched clauses, the qualified franchise of the Cape (section 35), and equality in the treatment of the two official languages (section 137). To amend the clauses required a two-thirds majority in a joint sitting of both houses of Parliament.<sup>420</sup> Violation of one entrenched right could indicate a willingness to violate the other. Thus the constitution irrevocably linked the interests of the English-speaking community with that of the Coloured community.<sup>421</sup> Thus, the NP's pursuit of its dual policies, Apartheid and Republicanism, was to provide ex-servicemen with the spur to mobilise politically.

The UP, the left-wing radicals and English-speaking society had come upon a common cause. The key to unlocking this populist potential lay with the ex-servicemen. In October 1949, the SL had already identified the Coloured franchise as a rallying issue and called for a meeting of influential

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<sup>414</sup> Reid, 'The Federal Party, 1953-1962', 2.

<sup>415</sup> Horn, 'Researching South African Prisoners-of-War Experience', 94; HJ Simons and RE Simons, *Class and Colour in South Africa 1850-1950* (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd, 1969), 517.

<sup>416</sup> Moffatt, 'From 'Conscience Politics' to the Battlefields of Political Activism', 25.

<sup>417</sup> PJ Furlong, 'Apartheid, Afrikaner Nationalism and the Radical Right: Historical Revisionism in Hermann Giliomee's the Afrikaners', *South African Historical Journal*, 49, no. 1 (2003), 222. Furlong uses the term "conservative revolution" to describe Apartheid and indicates that its pursuit after 1948 was a "sharp break with the liberal state which, despite its limitations, the pre-1948 state still was, at least for whites and to a degree for Coloureds".

<sup>418</sup> White, 'The South African Parliamentary Opposition, 1948-1953', 85.

<sup>419</sup> White, 'The South African Parliamentary Opposition, 1948-1953', 89; Hancock and van der Poel, *Selection from Smuts Papers Vol VI*, 250.

<sup>420</sup> White, 97.

<sup>421</sup> White, 257.



people in Johannesburg.<sup>422</sup> Around this time, the SL held discussions with Harry Oppenheimer, and Smuts, and the Coloured franchise issue probably formed part of the discussions.<sup>423</sup> The thuggish nature of NP political campaigning, especially in the Newlands by-election in around 1950, triggered many ex-servicemen to picket to 'protect' UP candidates.<sup>424</sup> In the same vein, radical ex-servicemen had since the war also picketed to protect CPSA speakers in Johannesburg.<sup>425</sup> By 1950, ex-Servicemen had already started protesting against the NP policies in Natal, Johannesburg and Kimberley.<sup>426</sup> In April 1951, representatives of the UP and the SL agreed to mobilise ex-servicemen discontent to force the government into an early election. They agreed to the formation of the War Veterans Action Committee (WVAC), later known as the Torch Commando (the Torch).<sup>427</sup> The SL had hoped that the initiative would lead to significant opposition to Apartheid.

In contrast, the UP was hoping that the Torch would provide the UP with campaign workers and a dependable voters' bloc.<sup>428</sup> The famous Battle of Britain Ace Wing Commander Adolphus (Sailor) Malan, headed up the executive committee, with the popular Major Louis Kane-Berman, son of Edith Kane-Berman, Chief Commandant of the Red Cross, and Major Ralph Parrott. Kane-Berman was involved in the National War Memorial Fund, and Parrott was awarded a Military Cross for his part in the Battle of Tobruk.<sup>429</sup> Sailor Malan expressed the opinion of many ex-servicemen during Torch parades:

Who has the greater claim to talk about saving white civilisation? the [*sic.*] moles who now pay lip service to it or the men who fought for it?<sup>430</sup>

We ex-servicemen and women and other citizens assembled here protest in the strongest possible terms against the action of the present Government in proposing to violate the spirit of the Constitution.<sup>431</sup>

On 31 May 1951, swelled by the support of ex-servicemen, the Torch converged on Parliament to demand early elections. Oppenheimer, and Sir De Villiers Graaff, both ex-servicemen and now rising MPs in the UP, quickly amended these demands, by persuading the Torch that the UP would not be prepared to fight an early election. The Torch, disarmed of its most dramatic demands, was left to warn the NP of its latent potential. During the march on Parliament, a more radical element fomented street fighting in the hope of sparking a violent revolt. When this failed, the Torch, under UP pressure,

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<sup>422</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A617, Springbok Legion, 'Minutes of a Meeting of the Action Committee Held on Wednesday October 19th 1949'.

<sup>423</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A617, Springbok Legion, 'Minutes of the Action Committee Meeting Held on Friday 12th August 1949, at Main House 196 Main Street, Johannesburg'.

<sup>424</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2077, Kane Berman, 'The Torch Commando. Its Beginning and End', 2.

<sup>425</sup> SAHA; AL2460; 'Interview with Joe Slovo by J Fredrickse'. 8.

<sup>426</sup> White, 'The South African Parliamentary Opposition, 1948-1953', 260.

<sup>427</sup> Lazerson, *Against the Tide*, 52.

<sup>428</sup> Lazerson, 63.

<sup>429</sup> Birkby, *The Saga of the Transvaal Scottish*, 527.

<sup>430</sup> Fridjhon, 'The Torch Command & The Politics of White Opposition', 3.

<sup>431</sup> Fridjhon, 4.



purged the SL members from its committees.<sup>432</sup> The SL came to an end when it amalgamated with the South African Congress of Democrats (SACOD) in 1953.<sup>433</sup>

The Torch, reluctant to become a political party, opted to support the UP and LP in the 1953 election as part of a United Democratic Front (the Front). However, the populist nature of their mission soon planted the seeds for the Torch's ultimate demise. The Natalian ex-servicemen, led by former POWs, Edward (Gillie) Ford and Reverend James Chutter, feared that removing the Coloured franchise was only a stepping stone to the declaration of an Afrikaner Republic.<sup>434</sup> The Natalians' concern about Afrikaner Nationalist resurgent Republicanism led to the infamous Natal Stand, which simply stated, was a threat of succession from the Union by Natal if the NP did not respect the 1910 Constitution. The Torch Executive supported this logic if only to dislocate the NP.<sup>435</sup>

The NP's continued assault on the Coloured Franchise and the UP's inability to stem the tide of repressive legislation, such as the Criminal Law Amendment Bill of 1953 known as 'The Swart Bill' after its originator Minister of Justice, Charles (CR) Swart, put the Torch at crossed purposes with the UP. In February 1953, Kane-Berman further alienated the Torch from the UP and business interests when he announced that the Torch was planning to oppose these bills by independent civil action.<sup>436</sup> Growing discontent with the UP within the Torch, coupled with the loss of funding, forced the Torch into crisis.<sup>437</sup>

The 1953 election loss provided the impetus for the liberals and the federalists to break from the UP.<sup>438</sup> UP-Torch co-operation ended when the rump of the Torch executive co-sponsored the formation of the Union Federal Party (UFP) in 1953.<sup>439</sup> In a bid to prevent the UFP encroaching, the Liberal Party (LPSA) declared itself around the same time.<sup>440</sup> By 1956, Graaff had taken control of the UP from Kosie Strauss and had cocooned himself with loyal ex-servicemen such as Vause Raw, John Bowring and Julius (Bill) Horak. The UP's continued vacillation on African representation eventually led to further splits in the UP in 1959 and 1975.<sup>441</sup>

By 1960, extra-parliamentary parties began considering violent alternatives in reaction to the increasing suppressive actions of the Nationalist state. The imprisonment of prominent liberal and radical activists during the 1956 treason trial and later in 1960 after the Sharpeville Massacre, provided an opportunity for them to open discussions regarding armed resistance. During their

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<sup>432</sup> Lazerson, *Against the Tide*, 63; White, 'The South African Parliamentary Opposition, 1948-1953', 268.

<sup>433</sup> Roos, *Ordinary Springboks*, 66.

<sup>434</sup> White, 'The South African Parliamentary Opposition, 1948-1953', 257; Reid, 'The Federal Party, 1953-1962', 2.

<sup>435</sup> Reid, 16.

<sup>436</sup> White, 'The South African Parliamentary Opposition, 1948-1953', 400.

<sup>437</sup> Fridjhon, 'The Torch Command & The Politics of White Opposition', 12.

<sup>438</sup> Fridjhon, 12.

<sup>439</sup> Reid, 'The Federal Party, 1953-1962', 48.

<sup>440</sup> Moffatt, 'From "Conscience Politics" to the Battlefields of Political Activism', 51.

<sup>441</sup> Mouton, 'A Decent Man, But Not Very Popular', 53, 64.

confinement in 1960, David (Monty) Berman, a former communist, and John Lang, a liberal, found common ground. Lang's failure to resuscitate the Torch in 1955,<sup>442</sup> opened the way for Berman and himself to become co-conspirators in the establishment of the National Committee for Liberation/African Resistance Movement (NCL/ARM) in 1960. The NCL/ARM began violent resistance in 1961.<sup>443</sup> Left-wing radical ex-servicemen within the SACOD became involved in the African National Congress' (ANC) armed struggle at the same time. Among them were Joe Slovo, Rusty Bernstein and many others also detained with Berman and Lang.<sup>444</sup>

## 1.5 CONCLUSION

Ex-servicemen accounted for a large segment of the leadership cadre of opposition politics in the 1950s. Prominent ex-servicemen appealed to the memory of wartime camaraderie when mobilising ex-servicemen at the political stumps. However, the divergent expectations within the ex-serviceman leadership cadre resulted in competing attempts to exploit the mass of the Torch for narrower political objectives. However, the focus on the Torch and SL should not detract attention from ex-servicemen in other political formations in the 1950s. The demise of the Torch did not mean an end to social capital derived from wartime service, as many ex-servicemen remained active in various opposition parties and movements.

It is impossible to ignore the role of the ex-servicemen in the leadership cadre of white opposition politics from 1948 until 1961. Many of these ex-servicemen came from different backgrounds and political ideologies to work against the NP. Often, they mobilised their collective war experience and sense of obligation to appeal to others. Their actions have established the belief that their war experience had a politicising effect on them. The veracity of this belief requires a closer study of ex-servicemen within the leadership cadre of white opposition politics. The link between wartime experience and political activism requires clarity around who they were, where they came from, where they served and what motivated them to pursue political careers. The next chapter investigates who these men were.

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<sup>442</sup> UNISA-UP Archives, Division of Information, File 158 (Part 1), War Veteran Torch Commando, John Lang, 'Letter from J Lang to AL Kowarsky, Esq. Dated 3rd February 1955'.

<sup>443</sup> Du Toit, 'The National Committee for Liberation', 68.

<sup>444</sup> Van der Waag, *A Military History of Modern South Africa*, 214.

## CHAPTER TWO: A BIOGRAPHICAL OVERVIEW OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN VOLUNTEERS UPON ENLISTMENT

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### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

As discussed in the previous chapter, White South African men volunteered for war service for various reasons, some because they believed in the war effort, some out of a sense of obligation, some for the adventure and others for financial gain. The shared war experience gave returning soldiers a sense of common identity. Major Geoffrey Tylden, a prominent South African military antiquarian, pursued the idea of South African soldiers as a uniform group or class,

In the course of the last war the South African soldier, irrespective of the language he spoke, evolved as a type. ...The men are inclined to think themselves as good as their officers, ... most of them were apt to think themselves better than those in command. They are impatient of being asked to suffer heavy loss, though they will stand up to it well enough if the occasion demands.<sup>445</sup>

The socialisation and comradeship within the context of wartime necessity may have resulted in such class formation. Military organisations and structures disrupted the peace-time structures of power, thereby allowing soldiers to access and develop new social networks, and question the accepted assumptions and practices of the day, regarding class and race. After the war, this constructed identity and commonality positioned soldiers to mobilise a more comprehensive social and conceptual framework in the pursuit of their future political careers.

As returning ex-servicemen entered into politics, the soldier typology expanded to accommodate the perception that their wartime experience had played a central part in moulding their political activism. The ex-serviceman identity, especially the influence of wartime experiences, became entangled with a liberal dispensation and a desire to effect change.<sup>446</sup> Randolph Vigne, a Liberal Party (LPSA) and NCL/ARM member, argued:

The Second World War did serve to raise the consciousness of a minority of white South Africans at the plight of blacks. Many among the English-speaking section, especially those serving in the South African forces, and some of their Afrikaner comrades, were won over to the democratic ideals to which they were exposed by the strongly anti-Nazi discourse of the day.<sup>447</sup>

However, a uniform transformation of political disposition, especially for a group with diverse backgrounds, requires further scrutiny. Arguments highlighting a symbiotic relationship between war experience and political activism require a broader conceptualisation to include factors such as the soldiers' personality and previous social environment.

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<sup>445</sup> Tylden, *The Armed Forces of South Africa*, 30.

<sup>446</sup> Van der Waag, *A Military History of Modern South Africa*, 213.

<sup>447</sup> Vigne, *Liberals Against Apartheid*, 4–5.

French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu's approach to social capital theory provides a theoretical structure in which to discuss how the war had influenced the development of the political attitude and actions of the ex-servicemen that had fought in the war. Bourdieu developed three theoretical concepts, namely habitus, capital, and fields, of which habitus and capital were useful for this study. Bourdieu defined Habitus as the internalisation of experience to provide a disposition for future action. Habitus, in simplistic terms, is what a person believes to be 'common sense' and "reasonable".<sup>448</sup> Peter Jackson explains the concept as follows:

The Habitus is constituted by conscious and unconscious learned experience on the one hand and by cumulative impact of practices on the other. It is first and foremost a 'system of durable dispositions' that have been internalised by the actor over time. This is both unconscious, through lived experience, and conscious or semi-conscious, through formal learning. Attitudes and inclinations are inculcated by the rhythms and habits of everyday life that are characteristic of the social and economic position occupied by the agent as well as by more formalised types of education and training. The effect of the Habitus is to provide the actor with an ingrained set of orientations that influence not only in the intellect but also in the physical relationship of the social actor to the external world.<sup>449</sup>

The habitus, as a position of attitude, interprets new experiences against a cumulative past experience. The primacy of early experience acquires a dominant role in the ongoing formation of habitus.<sup>450</sup> New habits are informed by foundational habitus, which in turn is shaped by new experiences and the environment. Habitus is the individual's ingrained history and is not consciously brought to mind but rather spontaneously used in decision making.<sup>451</sup> People with shared or similar life experiences often have similar habitus and thus make similar decisions and act the same.

The presence of shared experience and cultural conditioning in society allows for the identification of discreet and coherent classes or groups. Such generalisation allows for the quantification of similarities and lends to prosopography. However, Bourdieu does warn that such groupings or classes are not exact or explicit categories but rather dependent on similarities:

Though it is impossible for all (or even two members) of the same class to have had the same experiences, in the same order, it is certain that each member of the same class is more likely than any member of another class to have been confronted with the situations most frequent for members of that class.<sup>452</sup>

The argument allows for the grouping of individuals with similar foundational experiences, such as schooling, culture, religion, military experience, and education, into coherent classes irrespective of the order of the experiences.

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<sup>448</sup> Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, 55.

<sup>449</sup> Jackson, 'Pierre Bourdieu, the 'Cultural Turn' and the practice of international history', 164.

<sup>450</sup> Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, 61.

<sup>451</sup> Bourdieu, 56.

<sup>452</sup> Bourdieu, 59–60.

In the same way, the possession of similar capital suggests the formation of discrete classes. Magne Flemmen *et al.* argue that “social class divisions are understood in terms of the differential endowment of economic and cultural capital”.<sup>453</sup> Gal Levy and Orna Simon-Levy found that habitus formation is consistent within class categorisation, especially when transforming social capital from the military fields to other fields. When determining how soldiers valued their military experience, Levy and Simon-Levy found that middle-class soldiers tended to “turn their military jobs into an advantage for their prospective middle-class careers”. In contrast, soldiers from the working class “fail to render their military service useful in terms of life careers”.<sup>454</sup> The habitus and social capital of men before they enlisted for war service played an integral part in how they experienced war and provided a justification for military service afterwards.

Where habitus is a subconscious disposition towards the environment, capital is the currency employed to accumulate additional capital.<sup>455</sup> According to Bourdieu, capital includes all resources that are available to and used by individuals to pursue their objectives.<sup>456</sup> Capital can include any kind of competence or possession that is in short supply, unequally distributed and which is valued in some ‘market’ or social field, so that it may come to constitute an advantage for its holder.<sup>457</sup>

Bourdieu categorises capital into three forms: economic capital, cultural capital, and social capital. Economic capital, being materialistic, encompasses financial resources, assets, and income. Cultural capital is the ability to define and legitimise standards and values and is reliant on education, knowledge and symbolism.<sup>458</sup> Within the military, physical artefacts of cultural capital include titles, positions, rank and decorations. Social capital is “the actual and potential resources that can be mobilised through membership in social networks of actors and organisations”.<sup>459</sup> Furthermore, capital is malleable and convertible from one form of capital to another and from one field of use to another. The cost of conversion is dependent on its nature and the context in which the conversion takes place.<sup>460</sup>

Given the aim of this thesis, Bourdieu’s broad theoretical framework was useful in firstly exploring the influence of war service on the development of ex-servicemen’s political beliefs while on active duty. Secondly, how the war influenced the accrual of socio-political capital that was used after the war in opposition politics. However, in order to understand the influence of war service on these

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<sup>453</sup> Flemmen *et al.*, ‘Forms of Capital and Modes of Closure in Upper Class Reproduction’, 1279.

<sup>454</sup> G Levy and O Sasson-Levy, ‘Militarized Socialization, Military Service, and Class Reproduction: The Experiences of Israeli Soldiers’, *Sociological Perspectives* 51, no. 2 (2008), 368.

<sup>455</sup> Jackson, ‘Pierre Bourdieu, the ‘Cultural Turn’ and the practice of international history’, 168.

<sup>456</sup> HK Anheier, J Gerhards and FP Romo, ‘Forms of Capital and Social Structure in Cultural Fields: Examining Bourdieu’s Social Topography’, *American Journal of Sociology*, 100, no. 4 (1995), 860.

<sup>457</sup> Flemmen *et al.*, ‘Forms of Capital and Modes of Closure in Upper Class Reproduction’, 1279.

<sup>458</sup> Anheier *et al.*, ‘Forms of Capital and Social Structure in Cultural Fields’, 862; Flemmen *et al.*, ‘Forms of Capital and Modes of Closure in Upper Class Reproduction’, 1279.

<sup>459</sup> Anheier *et al.*, ‘Forms of Capital and Social Structure in Cultural Fields’, 862.

<sup>460</sup> Anheier *et al.*, 862.

men, one first needs to consider their pre-war habitus formation within this theoretical framework. Thus, this chapter aims to provide a broad background to the White men who volunteered for military service. To this end, the chapter takes a biographic and prosopographic approach to describe the servicemen's pre-war habitus formation, which includes an overview of their pre-war life before they enlisted, which will serve as a baseline understanding of biographic factors that influenced the formation of a collective military habitus and the accumulation of social capital. Within the broad tapestry of their ethnic, cultural, educational, and military experiences, the discussion focuses specifically on the group of ex-servicemen that pursued political careers at the national level after the war. The discussion uses the ex-servicemen's memoirs and biographies to position their experiences within the broader ex-serviceman community and to contextualise their differences from the ordinary. As stated, middle-class soldiers tended to use their military experience to advance their middle-class careers.

## 2.2 THE BIOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF POLITICALLY ACTIVE EX-SERVICEMEN

As the previous chapter argued, South Africa's declaration of war against the Axis Powers in 1939 further entrenched white divisions. Jan Smuts's grand experiment of 'South Africanism' to bring the English and Afrikaans-speakers together into one nation was left in tatters. DF Malan's Afrikaner nationalism and rising fascism not only drove a wedge between English and Afrikaans-speakers but also raised the spectre of antisemitism.<sup>461</sup> Caplin encapsulates the antagonism of the early months of the war:

All through these early months of the war the Opposition vented their rage upon the Prime Minister rather than upon the British section; Dr. Malan, Mr. Pirow, General Kemp, and the young Turks of Nationalism breathed fire and brimstone against the Jew and the Jingo, the Imperialist, the Capitalist – all, it would seem, personified in the Prime Minister. What venom they had left to them, after expending it upon General Smuts, was directed upon those Afrikaners who followed him, branding them as renegades, loyal Dutch, Hanskhakies, Jingo serfs, and British postillions.<sup>462</sup>

In the 1930s, Afrikaners nationalists had emulated the fascist and anti-Semitic conditions in Europe in South Africa. DF Malan and his supporters eagerly encouraged populist behaviour, hoping to dilute British influence in South Africa. The Afrikaans community broke into two factions, checking future reconciliation with the broader white society. The bruising parliamentary debate over the entry into the war, where each camp clearly articulated their positions had entrenched these divisions further.<sup>463</sup> As Herman Giliomee, argues

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<sup>461</sup> Shain, *A Perfect Storm*, 153; H Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 405.

<sup>462</sup> Caplin, *There are no South Africans*, 360-361.

<sup>463</sup> Furlong, *Between Crown and Swastika*, 115–17, 126; Shain, *A Perfect Storm*, 124, 136, 167; Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 439–40.



The decisive turning point was in fact South Africa's entry into the Second World War on a split vote in Parliament and the sharp cleavages that developed during the war between pro-war and anti-war factions in the white community, which largely ran along language lines.<sup>464</sup>

Thus, at the beginning of the war, separate Afrikaans and English-speaking communities could be identified, with different cultures and political beliefs, thereby providing a typology for analysis within Bourdieu's theoretical framework. The Afrikaner nationalists' casting of the Jewish community as an unabsorbable minority during the 1930s reinforced the Jewish community as a separate typology, a community separate from other Whites. Although they were White, "...they were of the wrong race".<sup>465</sup> Joshua Lazerson, in his analysis of South African radical politics in the 1950s, treats the Jewish community as a coherent sub-group in South African politics, arguing that the disproportionate role that the Jewish community played in radical circles, further justifies analysing them as a subset.<sup>466</sup>

The divisions in South African society were so glaring that Smuts when he assumed office as Prime Minister and Minister of Defence in 1939, had to confirm the loyalty of his general staff. After a vetting process, he appointed loyal officers to replace those suspected of fascist or ultra-nationalist leanings.<sup>467</sup> Smuts had already anticipated Italy's entry into the war and in order to circumvent the restrictions in the Defence Act, astutely decreed that all volunteers should take the Africa Service Oath.<sup>468</sup> Although the institution of the oath had removed the more ardent nationalist soldiers from the force, it also further reinforced divisions within White South African society.

The call-to-arms, officially made on 22 September 1939, was enthusiastically answered by those who supported the war. In some cases, even before the official announcement.<sup>469</sup> Scrubs Hartshorn, the mobilisation officer for the Witwatersrand Area, recalled, "In the last, climatic, few days during which Germany invaded Poland, and Great Britain issued its ultimatum to Hitler, the Johannesburg Drill Hall became the focal point of seething masses of A.C.F. soldiers ..."<sup>470</sup>

As discussed in Chapter One, the Union Defence Force (UDF) rapidly expanded and by July 1940, the UDF had one brigade in the field in Kenya. By November 1940, the brigade had grown to a complete division, and by June 1941, a second division was *en route* to Egypt.<sup>471</sup> The South African Air Force (SAAF) and the Seaward Defence Force (SDF) experienced similar expansion. The rapid expansion of the UDF was made possible by the broad base from which the volunteers came. The initial recruits represented the entire White male population, regardless of religion, race or class.

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<sup>464</sup> H Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, xvii.

<sup>465</sup> Shain, *A Perfect Storm*, 5.

<sup>466</sup> Lazerson, *Against the Tide*, 82.

<sup>467</sup> Van der Waag, *A Military History of Modern South Africa*, 183.

<sup>468</sup> Van der Waag, 185.

<sup>469</sup> Lambert, 'An Identity Threatened', 63; Orpen, *The Cape Town Highlanders*, 110.

<sup>470</sup> Hartshorn, *Avenge Tobruk*, 14.

<sup>471</sup> Van der Waag, *A Military History of Modern South Africa*, 186.



The scale of the first wave of recruits, and that officially no volunteer could be turned away created persistent problems for the UDF.<sup>472</sup> The UDF had to balance the manpower requirements of the military with that of industry. Artisans and skilled workers, whom the National Supplies Control Board had identified as industrial key men, had to be returned to their occupations.<sup>473</sup> Furthermore, although the UDF had imposed humanitarian restrictions, such as minors requiring parental permission to volunteer, and the exclusion of older men from combat, recruiters often adhered to these exclusions half-heartedly. As no recruit was turned away, the later 'combing out' of key men and youth from the regiments during training depleted the regiments that had recruited from industrial and administrative centres.<sup>474</sup> Secondly, as the first wave had severely depleted the recruitment pool of volunteers, subsequent recruitment efforts faced difficulties.<sup>475</sup>

The following discussion covers the nature of the early habitus of post-war politicians that volunteered to serve in the war from the perspective of cultural identity, class formation and age. The discussion adopts the three broad identities, Afrikaner, Jew and English-speaking, that had crystallised in South Africa before the war. The influence of the social status of the volunteer references their schooling and occupation on volunteering.

### 2.2.1 Ethnicity of volunteers

Determining the language of the UDF volunteers has vexed historians. The UDF did not record the home language of volunteers, to obscure societal divisions. However, the UDF did record the religion of the soldier, which considering the cultural centrality of religious faith during the period, provides a significant cultural and language marker. In South Africa, the White culture was predominantly linguistic-religion based, allowing for the argument that religious faith provides an accurate indicator of home language.<sup>476</sup> Despite apparent cultural differences between the White groups, inter-marriage did occur, and only after 1948 did their disentanglement become a matter of government concern.<sup>477</sup> Jonathan Fennell, using both religious affiliation and surnames, analysed a sample over a thousand service cards to determine the ethnicity of the white volunteers.<sup>478</sup> He provides an overview of the language of the UDF volunteer by year, as presented in Table 2.1.

**Table 2.1: Volunteers by Language (n=1082)**<sup>479</sup>

	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	Total
<b>Number in sample</b>	37	569	140	150	82	74	30	1082
<b>English</b>	49%	73%	46%	53%	51%	69%	87%	64%
<b>Afrikaans</b>	51%	27%	54%	47%	49%	31%	13%	36%

<sup>472</sup> Martin and Orpen, *South Africa at War*, 84.

<sup>473</sup> Martin and Orpen, *South Africa at War*, 33–34.

<sup>474</sup> Martin and Orpen, 63.

<sup>475</sup> Martin and Orpen, 225.

<sup>476</sup> Fennell, *Fighting the People's War*, 169.

<sup>477</sup> Van der Waag, *A Military History of Modern South Africa*, 175.

<sup>478</sup> Fennell, *Fighting the People's War*, 169–170.

<sup>479</sup> Fennell, 738.

Significantly, Fennell's survey contradicts the widely held belief that the majority of volunteers were Afrikaans speaking. Interestingly, Fennell opted to classify the Jewish soldiers as English, despite the Jewish community being a coherent ethnocultural sub-group. (Jewish soldiers indicated religion as Hebrew, Jewish and Atheist on attestation).

This study surveyed 153 post-war politicians (see Appendix: List of Ex-Servicemen considered in the Prosopographic Study), with war service, using a similar technique to Fennell, replicated Fennell's observation that more members of the English-speaking community volunteered for war service, as indicated in Table 2.2. The ethnic distribution of the 153 people in the group being 37 Afrikaners, 33 Jewish, and 83 English speakers.

**Table 2.2: Post-war politicians who served in the Second World War by year of attestation and Ethno-linguistic association (n=153)<sup>480</sup>**

	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	Total
<b>Sample</b>	29	75	15	14	12	7	1	153
<i>English</i>	38%	57%	53%	64%	50%	71%	100%	54%
<i>Jewish</i>	14%	24%	20%	14%	33%	29%	0%	22%
<b>English and Jewish</b>	52%	81%	73%	79%	83%	100%	100%	76%
<b>Afrikaans</b>	48%	19%	27%	21%	17%	0%	0%	24%

The cultural differences between the three groupings, English-speaking, Afrikaans-speaking and Jewish, would have influenced the motivation for volunteering and how the individual soldiers experienced the war. A broad survey of the foundational habitus or upbringing within each cultural typology provides insight into the influence that early life experiences had, how the soldiers experienced the war and the war's influence on later political involvement. These differences are the initial habitus that the war experience had either enhanced or displaced, to produce a common ex-serviceman political identity.

### 2.2.1.1 Afrikaner community

Smuts assiduously selected and staffed the upper echelon of the UDF with a near-perfect balance of English and Afrikaans officers, which resulted in a loyal cadre of Afrikaans officers.<sup>481</sup> The support of the officer cadre, and Afrikaner loyalists within the South African Party or *Bloed-sappe*, enabled Smuts to mobilise a significant segment of the Afrikaans community in support of the war.<sup>482</sup>

<sup>480</sup> Table developed by Author from DOD Archive, Personnel Archive (PA) Selection of Record Service Cards; using religion as proxy. Where no religion was stated, language was determined by consulting the UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information, File 35, Biographies 1951-1976, and UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information, File 65 1 5 (part 2), General Election 1953 UP Candidates' Information.

<sup>481</sup> Van der Waag, *A Military History of Modern South Africa*, 183.

<sup>482</sup> Grundlingh, 'The King's Afrikaners?', 360.

Brigadier General Keith van der Spuy, the Military Advisor in London, expressed relief when South Africa declared war in September 1939, stating “It was a glad day when the news came through that the South African Government had been defeated and, with General Smuts once again in the saddle, we had, naturally, cast our lot with the Allies.”<sup>483</sup>

Sailor Malan, an Afrikaans-speaker from Wellington in the Western Cape, experienced the rise of authoritarianism in Germany in his frequent visits to Hamburg and Keil as a merchant sailor before 1939. Identifying Nazism as the enemy, he joined the Royal Air Force (RAF) in preparation for the war.<sup>484</sup> His British loyalism and revulsion of fascism were shared by his brother “Bull” Malan, who participated in the invasion of Madagascar in 1942.<sup>485</sup>

Ernst Malherbe, recounts a conversation with fellow Afrikaner, Leo Marquard, in the Western Desert which summed up the Afrikaner support for the war:

I said to Leo, “Do you realise that about 40 years ago your father and mine shared a tent in the Anglo-Boer War fighting *against* the British? Now you and I are here fighting *with* the British, Isn't that remarkable?” “Not really, “E.G.” replied Leo, “Our fathers were fighting for their freedom against British imperialism. Now we are fighting against a worse imperialism, namely Hitler's. History is the story of man's eternal struggle for freedom”. With these words Leo virtually epitomised the feelings of so many Afrikaners who volunteered to serve in this war against Nazism.<sup>486</sup>

Both Malherbe and Marquard were archetypical ‘South Africanist’ Afrikaners.<sup>487</sup> Marquard's and Malherbe's fathers were Boer padres who had been captured and interned together during the Boer War.<sup>488</sup> After the Boer War, Ernst Malherbe Snr, as the padre at Villiersdorp, came under the patronage of the wealthy Graaff brothers, who had restored the local church and school (de Villiers Graaff School) at his request. When confronted on why, as a seventy-year-old Boer War Veteran, Malherbe Snr had joined up for the Second World War, he would retort: “I am not fighting *for* the British. I am fighting *with* the British against our common enemy, the Nazis.”<sup>489</sup>

Malherbe Jnr had pursued an academic career in the United States of America between the world wars. He first came to prominence in South Africa in 1920 as a driving member of the Carnegie Commission that studied South Africa's poor White problem. His appointment as Director of the Department of Census and Statistics in 1939 made him a natural choice to head up the UDF's information services and invigorate the Directorate Military Intelligence when the war broke out.<sup>490</sup>

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<sup>483</sup> KR van der Spuy, *Chasing the Wind* (Cape Town: Books of Africa, 1966), 212.

<sup>484</sup> Nasson, ‘A Flying Springbok of Wartime British Skies,’ 76.

<sup>485</sup> Nasson, 76.

<sup>486</sup> Malherbe, *Never a Dull Moment*, 217.

<sup>487</sup> J Lambert, ‘South African British? Or Dominion South Africans? The Evolution of an Identity in the 1910s and 1920s’, *South African Historical Journal*, 43, no. 1 (2000), 200-201.

<sup>488</sup> Malherbe, *Never a Dull Moment*, 7.

<sup>489</sup> Malherbe, 14.

<sup>490</sup> S Dubow, ‘Scientism, Social Research and the Limits of ‘South Africanism’: The Case of Ernst Gideon Malherbe,’ *South African Historical Journal*, 44, no. 1 (2001), 128.

Marquard had studied at Grey University College and Oxford University and was a history teacher at Grey College in Bloemfontein. He had served in the First World War in the RAF. After that war, Marquard founded the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) in 1924,<sup>491</sup> in the hope that NUSAS would bridge the ever-widening gap between students at the Afrikaans-medium and English-medium universities.<sup>492</sup> Marquard became well-known for his Marxist interpretation of South African politics in the book '*A Black Man's Burden*' which he published in 1943.<sup>493</sup> Both men returned to academia after the war.

Not all Afrikaans-speaking volunteers came from the Afrikaner gentry or had 'South Africanist' views. Poor Whites, who were mostly Afrikaners, further supplemented loyalist Afrikaner numbers in the UDF.<sup>494</sup> A stable income and better service benefits for foreign service enticed them to join.<sup>495</sup> David Brokensha, an English-speaking soldier from Natal, recalled

A disproportionate number of Afrikaners joined the army, partly because of their relative poverty: the depression of the 1930s had caused many Afrikaner bywoners (those who squatted on farms, having no land of their own) to leave the farms and migrate to the towns.<sup>496</sup>

Fred Carneson, an English-speaking soldier, recalled that a number of his fellow NCO's were semi-literate and battled to draft letters in their own language.<sup>497</sup> Peter Brown, a soldier from a wealthy Natalian family, also remembers that:

"[t]here were certainly some Afrikaners I met – from a poor background – who I think went into the army because it provided an income, security and ... of those, I think, although they were not particularly interested in the War, probably volunteered to go overseas".<sup>498</sup>

A substantial sector of the Afrikaans community was against Smuts's war policy and rejected the 'South Africanism' of the United Party (UP).<sup>499</sup> Incessant Afrikaner nationalist propaganda and rising fascism in South Africa further divided the Afrikaners as a political grouping.<sup>500</sup> Afrikaans soldiers were directly affected by this tension which upset their comrades-in-arms. Carneson noted that "some of them were being beaten up when they went to their home towns and their dorps [towns] and so forth, by these anti war elements".<sup>501</sup> Often tensions between soldiers and the anti-war Afrikaners turned violent. Brokensha, tells of an incident that occurred in Potchefstroom between the soldiers and students from the Afrikaans-medium University:

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<sup>491</sup> Dubow, 130.

<sup>492</sup> Cardo, 'Fighting a Worse Imperialism', 150.

<sup>493</sup> Cardo, 159.

<sup>494</sup> Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 318, 406.

<sup>495</sup> Grundlingh, 'The King's Afrikaners?', 361.

<sup>496</sup> Brokensha, *Brokies Way*.

<sup>497</sup> SAHA, AL2460, 'Interview with F Carneson by J Fredrikse'; Isacowitz, *Telling People What They Do Not Want to Hear*, 113.

<sup>498</sup> APC, OHP 'Interview with Peter Brown by Norman Bromberger,'.

<sup>499</sup> Van der Waag, *A Military History of Modern South Africa*, 178.

<sup>500</sup> Van der Waag, 178.

<sup>501</sup> SAHA, AL2460, 'Interview with F Carneson by J Fredrikse'.

The troops would return from weekend leave in Johannesburg on the last train, alighting at a small siding, a mile from our camp. One night one of the stragglers, a small and mild and popular man, was found with a broken leg, having been attacked by a group of townspeople. In retaliation, an angry mob of soldiers invaded the university, thrashing all the students they could find. (Neither Paul nor I took part in this reprisal raid.) My fellow soldiers boasted that they had found a grand piano, played God Save the King, forced the students to stand to attention and then thrown [*sic.*] the piano over a balustrade.<sup>502</sup>

Despite the open opposition to the war by the National Party (NP), many Afrikaner nationalists were not averse to fighting in the war. Sir De Villiers Graaff, son of Sir David Graaff, recalled after the war that “in fact many of them later enlisted in the Army”.<sup>503</sup> Hartshorn, who had served as brigade major with the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, observed that: “Among the troops [in 1 SA Bde] were a great many who came from Nationalist families and whose political thinking undoubtedly had been nationalist”.<sup>504</sup>

The Afrikaner nationalist parties were able to retain an element of support even among the soldiers that were on active duty, despite these parties being either anti-war or sympathetic to the German side. In the 1943 ‘*Khaki*’ elections approximately 4 per cent of soldiers on active duty voted for Afrikaner nationalist parties.<sup>505</sup>

The Afrikaans-speakers’ motivation for volunteering to fight in the war varied tremendously. The ‘South Africanist’ Afrikaner found justification in principle and was loyal to Smuts. For the poorer working-class, volunteering for the war service provided an escape from abject poverty, and for the restless, the war provided the promise of adventure and travel. Whatever the motivation for volunteering, the substantial anecdotal evidence suggests that the Afrikaans-speaking soldiers made up for at least 50 per cent of the UDF personnel.<sup>506</sup> (However, Fennell’s recent empirical evidence discussed previously, does dispute the accepted view).

The war aggravated the fissions within Afrikaner politics. The anti-war and anti-British rhetoric of the Afrikaner nationalists failed to swing all of Afrikanerdom into the Nationalist camp. Despite the Afrikaner nationalists’ efforts to politicise Afrikaner culture, the loyal *Bloed-sappe* support for the UP remained unwavering. In the 1948 elections, an estimated 39.5 per cent of the Afrikaner electorate voted for Smuts.<sup>507</sup> South Africanism and Afrikaner participation in the war left an indelible mark on the Afrikaner *Bloed-sappe*. In 1959, the *Bloed-sappe* invoked the Afrikaner participation in the wars when they pleaded to stem the predominantly English-speaking break-away to the Progressive Party (PP):

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<sup>502</sup> Brokensha, *Brokies way*.

<sup>503</sup> Graaff, *Div Looks Back*, 62.

<sup>504</sup> Hartshorn, *Avenge Tobruk*, 38.

<sup>505</sup> FD Tothill, ‘The Soldiers’ Vote’, 86.

<sup>506</sup> Malherbe, *Never a Dull Moment*, 217; SAHA, AL2460, ‘Interview with F Carneson by J Fredrikse’.

<sup>507</sup> White, ‘The United Party and the 1953 General Election’, 57.

We the United Party Afrikaners have stood by you for many years. On two occasions we have made your wars our wars also. If you desert us now you will destroy our confidence in what we have stood for all these years. You give us a knockout blow from which we will never recover.<sup>508</sup>

### 2.2.1.2 Jewish community

The Jewish community in South Africa was always a small minority living on the edge of the English-speaking community. However, the persistent antisemitism in the tottering Russian Empire (1880-1918) and the subsequent spread of antisemitism into Eastern Europe before the First World War led to a substantial injection of Eastern European Jews into South Africa.<sup>509</sup> Gideon Shimoni, a South African Jewish historian, estimates that approximately 40 000 Jews entered South Africa between 1880 and 1910. The majority fled from the Russia Pale of Settlements, specifically Lithuania.<sup>510</sup> Young Jewish men, of the Pale of Settlements, were influenced by a cocktail of Zionism, communism and Bundist socialism that was sweeping through Eastern Europe in the 1880s and onwards.<sup>511</sup> These Jews brought with them a socialist tradition that drew them towards political action.<sup>512</sup> By 1917, enough Jews in South Africa had joined the International Socialist Legion, the forerunner of the CPSA, to have warranted the formation of a Jewish or Yiddish-speakers branch.<sup>513</sup> The rise of Nazism in the 1930s also brought about 3 600 fleeing German-Jews to South Africa's shores which further strengthened the Jewish community.<sup>514</sup> By 1936 there were 90 645 Jews in South Africa which comprised 4.5 per cent of the White population.<sup>515</sup>

The coming to power of Adolf Hitler in Germany in January 1933 triggered the surfacing of several fascist movements in South Africa, emulating the Nazi and Fascist movements of Germany and Italy.<sup>516</sup> Hitler's known hatred of the Jews made the appearance of Nazi-sponsored behaviour in South Africa particularly distasteful.<sup>517</sup> Hitler began almost immediately to separate the German-Jews from German society. In April 1933 he passed the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service to remove all Jews from the German civil service. In response to growing harassment, 38 000 Jews left Germany in 1933, in 1934 another 22 000 left and in also 1934 another 21 000 fled.<sup>518</sup> Aaron Berman, a Jewish Cape Town City Councillor warned in 1934 that "[t]here would

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<sup>508</sup> Jacobs, *Beckoning Horizons*, 170.

<sup>509</sup> Lazerson, *Against the Tide*, 84; S Gilbert, 'Jews and the Racial State: Legacies of the Holocaust in Apartheid South Africa, 1945-60,' *Jewish Social Studies*, 16, no. 3 (2010), 38; Shain, *A Perfect Storm*, 4.

<sup>510</sup> G Shimoni, *Community and Conscience: The Jews in Apartheid South Africa* (Glosderry: David Philip Publishers, 2003), 3.

<sup>511</sup> Isacowitz, *Telling People What They Do Not Want to Hear*, 72.

<sup>512</sup> M Israel and S Adams, "That Spells Trouble": Jews and the Communist Party of South Africa', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 26, no. 1 (2000), 143; T Lodge, 'Secret Party' 441.

<sup>513</sup> Shimoni, *Community and Conscience*, 8.

<sup>514</sup> Gilbert, 'Jews and the Racial State', 36; Shimoni, *Community and Conscience*, 2.

<sup>515</sup> Shimoni, *Community and Conscience*, 2.

<sup>516</sup> SAHA, AL2460, 'Interview with F Carneson by J Fredrikse'; Furlong, *Between Crown and Swastika*, 16, 20; Shain, *A Perfect Storm*, 62.

<sup>517</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *South African Jews in World War Two*, 2.

<sup>518</sup> N Ferguson, *The War of the World. History's Age of Hatred* (London: Penguin Books, 2006), 269.



always be Jews scattered all over the world regarded as 'different' from the people among whom they lived. If fascism arose they were bound to be persecuted in the name of 'unity'".<sup>519</sup>

In November 1936 a group of Stellenbosch University academics, which included Professors Hendrick Verwoerd, Krissie Schumann, Johannes Basson and Dr Eben Dönges supported agitation to prevent the German Liner *Stuttgart* from docking in Cape Town with 537 German-Jewish refugees aboard.<sup>520</sup> Such academic endorsement stoked anti-Semitic sentiment in the country further.

Wolfie Kodesh, a Jewish schoolboy from Cape Town, remembers that in the 1930s "the prejudice amongst the Afrikaaners [*sic.*] against the Jews was terrible ... at that time they used to beat up old men coming out of the synagogues..."<sup>521</sup> Growing antisemitism, which was inherent in fascism, politicised the Jewish community. In the mid-1930s, fascism triggered the first sense of political awareness for Rusty Bernstein, a Jewish junior architect studying at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), which drew him into left-wing politics, he recalls, "... I came into politics not because of the racial question but as an opponent of fascism and in an attempt to stop the rise of fascism."<sup>522</sup>

In May 1938, the rise of the Black-shirt and Grey-shirt movements on the Rand troubled Leo Lovell, a Jewish lawyer, and his wife to the point that they mobilised the Jewish community in Benoni to disrupt anti-Semite meetings.<sup>523</sup> He recounts:

Is this Berlin or Benoni?" I cannot believe my own eyes and ears. And we were told to keep away and not to provoke these hooligans? What, and let them terrorise everyone and get control of bigger and bigger crowds? And then who will stop them? Isn't this what happened in Germany? Nobody stopped them when they were few because they were hooligans; not because they were few. And now no-one stops them, not because they are hooligans, but because they are too many! We took a vow, my wife and I, there and then, in the street near the library, that no Nazis would ever hold their meetings again in Benoni, not if we could help it!<sup>524</sup>

The Jewish community, motivated by antisemitism in Europe and the growth of fascism in South Africa, supported the war effort. The South African Jewish Board of Deputies called on the South African Jewish community to support the war effort, declaring:

At this critical hour when Nazism is destroying the liberties of nations and individuals, and challenging the fundamental ideals of civilisation, this Congress of South African Jewry solemnly affirms the obligation of every citizen resident in South Africa to rally to the defence of the country, and further pledges that the Jewish community will do all in its power to assist the Union and its allies in the fight for victory.<sup>525</sup>

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<sup>519</sup> Shain, *A Perfect Storm*, 45.

<sup>520</sup> Shain, 131.

<sup>521</sup> SAHA, AL2460, 'Interview with Wolfie Kodesh by J Fredrikse'.

<sup>522</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A3299 E1, Hilder and Rusty Bernstein Papers, 'Interview by Terri Barnes for the ANC / University of Connecticut Oral History Project, Cape Town, 28 February 2001'.

<sup>523</sup> Lovell, *For the Love of Justice*, 64–72.

<sup>524</sup> Lovell, 66.

<sup>525</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *South African Jews in World War Two*, 5.

Kodesh explains the mood at the time, neatly merging race, Jewish-ness and anti-fascism into a single call-to-arms:

one of the very good reasons why a lot of us joined - For instance myself, was not only that I was against racialism of any sort, but of course being of not orthodox but being Jewish I would be a victim of Hitler.<sup>526</sup>

Despite the disproportionately large number of Jews volunteering to fight in the war, there were still incidents of antisemitism in the UDF. In 1940, the Director General Medical Services (DGMS), Colonel Sir Edward Thornton, had to address antisemitism in a regiment where the Afrikaner officers were agitating for the replacement of Jewish doctors. However, Thornton remained adamant that doctors would be judged only on their medical competency and not their religion.<sup>527</sup>

The rise of antisemitism both in South Africa and in Europe informed the Jewish community's motivation to volunteer. Officially, the Jewish Board of Deputies argued that their willingness to sacrifice as a community proved their loyalty and assimilability as South Africans. The total number of Jews serving in the UDF was estimated to be 10 000. The Jewish community at the time represented about 4.4 per cent of the White population.<sup>528</sup> Despite the efforts of the Jewish community to support the war effort, assimilation into White South African society remained reliant on the softening of the racial identities of the dominant White groups.

### 2.2.1.3 The English-speaking community

The most pliable White identity in South Africa was the English-speaking community. Although cast as the diametric opposite of the Afrikaner community, the English-speaking community was not homogenous. John Lambert, a historian of the South African-English, explains that "[t]he fact that most British South Africans ... define themselves as British should not mask the fact that they were not a monolithic group and that there were as many differences as commonalities between British South Africans."<sup>529</sup>

Although a shared British heritage provided the foundation of the English-speaking identity, Afrikaner nationalist's casting of the English-speaking community as the opponent of Afrikaner nationalism also contributed to the English-speaking identity construction. Umberto Eco, an Italian academic and essayist, explains how such adversarial identity formation creates symmetrical sympathy between identities; "Having an enemy is important not only to define our identity but also to provide an obstacle against which to measure our system of values and, in seeking to overcome, to demonstrate our own worth."<sup>530</sup>

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<sup>526</sup> SAHA, AL2460, 'Interview with Wolfie Kodesh by J Fredrikse'.

<sup>527</sup> Martin and Orpen, *South Africa at War*, 47.

<sup>528</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *South African Jews in World War Two*, 14.

<sup>529</sup> Lambert, 'South African British?', 205.

<sup>530</sup> U Eco, *Inventing the Enemy* (London: Harvill Secker, 2011), 2.

The enemy is cast as a foreigner, someone who looks different, behaves differently and speaks differently, and these differences or ‘otherness’ become the symbol of the threat.<sup>531</sup> Thus the English-speaking identity expanded to include not only those of British descent but also any other outsider to the *Volks*. All Whites, who were part of the Afrikaner’s ‘other’, were declared ‘*Engelse*’.<sup>532</sup> George Calpin explains that “[t]he Jew, the Jingo, the Imperialist, the Liberal, and the Britisher are thus bunched together in a mass as unnational and anti-Afrikaner. The terms Jewry, Jingoism, Imperialism, Liberalism are synonymous in the language of the Afrikaner Nationalists.”<sup>533</sup>

Despite the apparent diversification and expansion of the English-speaking typology, Giliomee perpetuated the myth of a homogeneous English-speaking community in binary rivalry against the Afrikaner by arguing that “The Afrikaner-British rivalry should be understood as a typical fight over relative group status and symbols similar to other such struggles around the world.”<sup>534</sup> The Afrikaner nationalists’ and later Afrikaans historians’ portrayal of the *Engelse* (South African English-Speaking Community) as a coherent mirror of the *Afrikanervolk* (Afrikaner Nation) has obscured the diversity of this group.

The English-speaking community was comprised of waves and trickles of immigrants from Britain, and the rest of the world. The timing of their arrival and where they had settled resulted in several distinct English-speaking identities emerging:

There was ... not much in common between the British of Cape Town whose identity was interwoven with Cape traditions and Cape liberalism; those of Natal with their strident anti-Indian and anti-Afrikaner sentiments; or those of Johannesburg with their more materialistic outlook.<sup>535</sup>

However, the constant engagement with the ‘home country’ kept the South African-British culture attached to a broader sense of Britishness and provided a semblance of continuity between the various groups, even if South Africans seemed archaic to their European counterparts.<sup>536</sup> As British immigrants did not flee oppression, there was a lack of grievance with the ‘home countries’ which meant that they did not seek to create a new identity in South Africa consciously. Instead, they sought to replicate the best of their old ways within a new context, underwritten and protected by a British Hegemony.<sup>537</sup> Culturally, the English-speaker looked to Britain for their values. Their consumption of British literature instilled a sense of Whiteness and masculinity in the English-speaking youth.<sup>538</sup>

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<sup>531</sup> Eco, 3–5.

<sup>532</sup> Lambert, ‘South African British?’, 203.

<sup>533</sup> Calpin, *There Are No South Africans*, 198.

<sup>534</sup> Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, xvi.

<sup>535</sup> Lambert, ‘South African British?’, 206.

<sup>536</sup> Calpin, *There Are No South Africans*, 12.

<sup>537</sup> Lambert, ‘An Identity Threatened’, 60.

<sup>538</sup> Lambert, 58.

British-settler masculinity, with its emphasis on duty and service, was further reinforced by sociocultural institutions such as churches, schools, volunteer regiments and social societies.<sup>539</sup> The masculine hegemony was not exclusively or dominantly 'English', but rather an amalgamation of the Irish, Welsh, Scottish and English, tempered by engagements with other South African cultures. Of these, the South African-Scottish maintained a unique but subsidiary identity by the formation of Caledonian Societies and military regiments.<sup>540</sup> Calpin portrays the Scottish influence as "...if there is a band to play the British to church or city hall on some day of memory or protest, it will be provided, kilted and piped, by the Caledonian Society, not by an English brass band, Burns and St. Andrew taking precedence over St. George and Merrie England".<sup>541</sup> Despite the differences within the English-speaking community, the common thread that held them together was the British Crown and membership of the British Commonwealth.

The English community was generally loyal to the crown, the idea of empire and a connection with Britain, but within a South African context.<sup>542</sup> In the interwar period, the community developed a strong sense of South Africanism, similar to the South Africanism advocated by Smuts, Hofmyer and Malherbe.<sup>543</sup> The English-speakers did not experience any contradiction between loyalty to the British Crown and the ideals of South Africanism.<sup>544</sup> Charles Evenden, the founder of the Memorable Order of the Tin Hats (MOTHS), sums up the English-speaking community's affinity to 'South Africanism' as espoused by Smuts, "Smuts made you proud you were a South African".<sup>545</sup>

The English-speaking community was vigorously in support of the war in defence of the commonwealth.<sup>546</sup> Only one English speaking MP voted against entering the war. Furthermore, the populist nature of Nazism and Fascism was the antithesis to a long tradition among the English-speakers of individual rights and constitutional governance.<sup>547</sup> Joining up to fight against Germany and Fascism was more than political, it was also a moral duty to King and Country. Carneson expressed this sentiment succinctly:

We used to see them walking round [*sic.*] with their swastikas and their grey shirts and all the rest of them, you know, in Pietermaritzburg... It takes on added significance now, because there's always the possibility of a fascist solution, not just the sort of heavy handed military police brutality methods that we've got now but these madmen taking over - there is that possibility, although I

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<sup>539</sup> J Lambert, 'Maintaining a British Way of Life: English-Speaking South Africa's Patriotic, Cultural and Charitable Associations', *Historia*, 54, no. 2 (2009), 63; Lambert, 'Munition Factories', 68; R Morrell, *From Boys to Gentlemen. Settler Masculinity in Colonial Natal 1880-1920* (Pretoria: UNISA, 2001), 272, 618.

<sup>540</sup> Lambert, 'South African British?', 206; J Hyslop, Cape Town Highlanders, Transvaal Scottish: Military 'Scottishness' and social power in nineteenth and twentieth century South Africa', *South African Historical Journal*, 47, no. 1 (2002), 98.

<sup>541</sup> GH Calpin, *At Last We Have Got Our Country Back* (Cape Town: Buren Publishers, 1968), 10.

<sup>542</sup> Lambert, 'Their Finest Hour?', 61.

<sup>543</sup> Lambert, 'An Identity Threatened', 51-52.

<sup>544</sup> Lambert, 'An Unknown People', 599-617; Lambert, 'An Identity Threatened', 51.

<sup>545</sup> Lambert, 'An Identity Threatened', 58.

<sup>546</sup> Lambert, 56.

<sup>547</sup> Lambert, 'An Unknown People', 602.

think that there (are) a hell of a lot of whites who'll be looking at this, including Afrikaaners [*sic.*], and not liking it one little bit, because in a sense it runs across a lot of their own internal democratic traditions...<sup>548</sup>

The masculine hegemony, instilled by the English-speaking community's institutions, was so ingrained that the idea of duty, service and loyalty was synonymous and the schoolboy ideas of "...loyalty to team, house and school, ... translated seamlessly into loyalty to country, empire and monarchy".<sup>549</sup> Walter Hain, a schoolboy from Pretoria Boys High School (PBHS), recalling his decision to volunteer was a moral duty, "When there is such a war then you have to be involved. It's your duty".<sup>550</sup> The explanation of Brown, a former Head boy at Michaelhouse, further illustrates how ingrained moral obligation was in the habitus of the English-speaking community. Volunteering was simply 'common sense':

It wasn't because I was drawn in any way to the military life, because I hated cadets at school too. But there was no question that that was what one wanted to do as soon as one got out of school, and parents, of course, tried to hold it up or postpone it for as long as they could, I think.<sup>551</sup>

Len Lee-Warden, a printer that had emigrated to Cape Town from Britain in 1936, experienced a similar inarticulate compulsion to fight in the war:

A letter from my mother told me that my younger brother Reg was with the BEF in France while Jack was in the RAF. I wanted so desperately to play a part. By March 1940 a mobile printing unit had been started by the Government Printer and I enlisted.<sup>552</sup>

For Colin Eglin, his joining was also a matter of course. However, he was allocated to the Cape Garrison as part of the 10 light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, he quickly became dissatisfied with guard duty in Cape Town and became restless.

I hadn't joined up to spend my army career in base camp. I sought and obtained a meeting with the officer commanding my unit and explained my wish to 'go North'. I was assigned for active service in the middle East.<sup>553</sup>

Thus, generally, masculinity and a sense of moral duty were deeply embedded within the English-speaking community and motivated men to enlist. Such moral compulsion to do one's duty was not only limited to English-speaking men, but also extended to women, albeit to a far lesser extent. Eglin's mother also signed up for service as a secretary at the SAAF area headquarters at Youngsfield. She later transferred to defence headquarters in Pretoria.<sup>554</sup>

Lambert summarises the stakes at play for English-speaking South Africans. They believed that "...they were fighting for a righteous cause, to free the world from oppression..."; that they were

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<sup>548</sup> SAHA, AL2460, 'Interview with F Carneson by J Fredrickse'.

<sup>549</sup> Lambert, 'Munition Factories', 68.

<sup>550</sup> P Hain, *Ad and Wal: A Story of Values, Duty, Sacrifice* (London: Biteback Publishing, 2014), 32.

<sup>551</sup> APC, OHP 'Interview with Peter Brown by Norman Bromberger,' 8–9.

<sup>552</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2521 aa, David Everatt Papers; 'Memoirs Len Lee-Warden', 8.

<sup>553</sup> Eglin, *Crossing the Borders of Power*, 17.

<sup>554</sup> Eglin, 15.

fighting for personal loyalty to friends in South Africa and Britain; and that the war would be an adventure. Finally, “the survival of Britain was now at stake. Her survival was seen as a vital South African interest but also aroused an instinctive emotional reaction among many of those English-speakers who flocked to enlist”.<sup>555</sup>

### 2.2.2 Schooling

The South Africanist’s inability to interrogate their volunteerism beyond ‘common-sensical’ responses, suggests that the deep inculcation of a masculine code, which emphasised duty and adventure as part of their habitus, occurred during their early-life development. Schooling, especially at elite schools in South Africa, may have been responsible for instilling such an unquestioning, almost unconscious, need to sustain the dominant hegemony. Bourdieu identified the education system as a means for elite reproduction, whereby the dominant classes institutionalised their value systems in society and transferred symbolic and social capital to the next generation.<sup>556</sup>

Robert Morrell elaborates on Bourdieu’s concepts to argue that schooling in South Africa reinforced the dominant masculine-based hegemony in three ways. Firstly, the school provided access to the overlapping networks of elites. Past pupils became prominent members of society, creating an ‘old boys’ patronage network (which alienated women and ‘lesser’ men). Secondly, the schools quickly became ‘defining institutions’ as prominent ‘old boys’ were able to exert indirect control over society’s norms and values. Lastly, through the repetition of gendered tasks, a consistent understanding of masculinity could be negotiated between schoolmasters, prefects, and pupils.<sup>557</sup>

The elite South African schools, both private and government, both English and Afrikaans medium, drew inspiration from the Victorian public school model. Lord Alfred Milner, as an administrator of the Transvaal before Union, had made it a matter of administrative policy to establish state schools based on the model.<sup>558</sup> The schools emphasised a sense of loyalty to school and country, and perpetuated the “rituals of Anglicanism, masculinity and Englishness”.<sup>559</sup> John Honey, elaborates further:

...the influence of the English public school model can be seen in many aspects of South African high schools—in private schools (obviously) but also in English-medium government schools, and even to some extent in Afrikaans-medium schools also. Indeed, I would go further, and say that

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<sup>555</sup> Lambert, ‘Their Finest Hour?’, 71–72.

<sup>556</sup> M Sabour, ‘The State Nobility : Elite Schools in the Field of Power by Pierre Bourdieu,’ *Acta Sociologica*, 42, no. 2 (1999), 188–89.

<sup>557</sup> Morrell, *From Boys to Gentlemen*, 49.

<sup>558</sup> JR de S Honey, ‘Arnolds of the Bushveld,’ *Symposium: A Journal of Education in Southern Africa* (1975/76), 22.

<sup>559</sup> Lambert, ‘Munition Factories’, 67; Cardo, *Opening Men’s Eyes*, 29; Calpin, *At Last We Have Got Our Country Back*, 153.



in some notable respects, South African high schools are stuck fast in the 19th century model of the English public school....<sup>560</sup>

The elites schooling system in South Africa has been characterised by:

...certain distinctive conceptions of the role of headmaster and staff; an internal organisation and hierarchy of discipline based on prefects and a “house” system; compulsory organised games; uniform, assembly (whether in hall or chapel) and a range of other phenomena designed to emphasize the concept of the school as a self-conscious community, attracting to itself the loyalty both of its past and of its present members, and aiming to exert on its pupils an emotional hold not just during their schooldays, but for life.<sup>561</sup>

Peter Randell concurs in his description of both elite private and government schools in South Africa:

They are boys’ schools; their early headmasters were mostly public school men from England; and they display typical public school features such as a strong academic bias and the retention of Latin as an important part of the curriculum; a private mythology and the fostering of ‘school spirit’ and tradition; boarding houses and intense inter-house rivalry; prefectorial and fragging systems: governing bodies - largely symbolic since effective power is vested in the provincial authorities; compulsory uniforms and games; waiting lists of the children of past pupils; powerful Old Boys’ societies; and they often have preparatory schools associated with them and acting as their main feeder schools.<sup>562</sup>

The status of the elite English schools appealed to prominent Afrikaans-speakers who sent their sons to these schools. Table 2.3 shows that within the sample group, there was a fair amount of Afrikaans attendance at these schools. Furthermore, Afrikaans schools also adopted the essence of ‘the model’:

Yet, almost everything that is familiar in an English school appears in them [Afrikaans School] with illuminating meaning; the school crest, the school motto, the school house system; the prefect or monitorial order; all that is typical of that most typical English institutions, the English public school, translated into the Afrikaner idiom.<sup>563</sup>

The schools upheld a tradition of military volunteerism, and during the First World War, the elite boys’ schools of South Africa<sup>564</sup> provided a constant flow of volunteers, both in the form of teachers and scholars, for the South African war effort.<sup>565</sup> The memory of the Great War was seamlessly entwined into masculine hegemony and school rituals by the symbolism of remembrance. Brokensha’s

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<sup>560</sup> JR de S Honey, ‘Tom Brown in South Africa: Inaugural Lecture Delivered at Rhodes Univeristy’ (Grahamstown: Rhodes University, 1972), 8–9.

<sup>561</sup> Honey, ‘Arnolds of the Bushveld’, 23.

<sup>562</sup> PR Randall, ‘The English Private School System in South Africa’ (Masters dissertation, University of Witswatersrand, 1980), 31.

<sup>563</sup> Calpin, *At Last We Have Got Our Country Back*, 152.

<sup>564</sup> Lambert, ‘Munition Factories’, Lambert provides a list of schools he considers elite schools, which includes: Greys College (Afrikaans), Diocesan College (Bishops), St Andrew’s College, Michaelhouse, St John’s College, South African College School (SACS), Hilton College, Rondebosch High School, Wynberg High School, Stellenbosch High School, Maritzburg College, Durban high School, Pretoria Boys High School, King EdwardVII School, Jeppe Boys High School, and Selborne College.

<sup>565</sup> Lambert, 67.

experience at Durban High School is insightful in understanding how ritual, hierarchy and tradition was perpetuated and ingrained in schoolboys:

Proudly wearing my new boater (the school straw hat, commonly referred to as a 'basher'), I walked under an arch, and was promptly told by one of the school prefects to follow him. I knew this senior boy – everyone knew Skonk Nicholson (head boy, captain of both cricket and rugby) – and I wondered why he should deign to notice me. Taking me into the 'boot room', where several other prefects lounged about, he told me to bend over, and, with no explanation, he caned me. It was not very painful: I remember feeling above all puzzled as to what my offence was. As I left the room, one of the prefects said, 'Next time, you will pay respect and remove your basher.' Later I learned that the arch was a memorial to DHS boys who had been killed in World War 1.

Such ritualistic behaviour implicitly instilled the need to protect the school, country and commonwealth. Along with the physical masculinity, a 'Christian' sense of stewardship (inherited from the involvement of the Anglican Church) was also prevalent. Lovell, a pupil of Grey High School, touches on the more spiritual aspect of the 'English Tradition' of Education,<sup>566</sup> reflecting that "... the system of discipline was firm, a sense of balance, and above all justice pervaded the school."<sup>567</sup> The founder of Michaelhouse, James Todd, summed up the ethos of these schools in his Speech Day address in 1897, "Our aim is to make, not accountants, not clerks, not clergymen, but men; men of understanding, thought and culture".<sup>568</sup>

Table 2.3 lists the schools that produced many of the post-war politicians who served in the war. Elite schools dominate the list. These schools were structured according to the English public school model, implicitly and explicitly reinforcing Victorian masculine values. A 1971 study of the White elite in South Africa, confirms how persistent these schools were at elite propagation. The study lists the schools that were most prolific at perpetuating the South African White elite. The list included Paul Roos Gymnasium, Grey College, Paarl Boys High School (Dual medium), Paarl Gymnasium, Wellington Seun's Hoërskool, Jan van Riebeck Hoërskool, Durban High School, South African College School (SACS), King Edward VII School (KES), St Andrew's College, Bishops College, Jeppe High School for Boys (JHSB), Rondebosch High School, PBHS, St John's College, Michaelhouse, Kingswood College and Grey High School.<sup>569</sup>

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<sup>566</sup> Randall, 'The English Private School System in South Africa', 105–7.

<sup>567</sup> Lovell, *For the Love of Justice*, 17.

<sup>568</sup> Cardo, *Opening Men's Eyes*, 28.

<sup>569</sup> MJ Ashley, 'The Education of White Elites in South Africa,' *Comparative Education*, 7, no. 1 (1971), 36, 39.

**Table 2.3: Alma mater of ex-serviceman politicians (n=153)<sup>570</sup>**

School <sup>571</sup>	Pupils				Type of school	Province
	Afr	Eng	Jew	Total		
<b>Durban HS</b>	-	4	3	7	Government (English)	Natal
<b>Diocesan (Bishops)</b>	1	5	-	6	Anglican	Western Cape
<b>KES</b>	1	3	1	5	Government (Milner- English)	Transvaal
<b>PBHS</b>	-	2	3	5	Government (Milner- English)	Transvaal
<b>SACS</b>	-	4	1	5	Collegiate (English)	Western Cape
<b>Dale College</b>	-	3	1	4	-	Eastern Cape
<b>Ficksburg HS</b>	3	1	-	4	Government (Afrikaans)	Free State
<b>Grey HS</b>	-	3	1	4	Government (English)	Eastern Cape
<b>Maritzburg College</b>	-	4	-	4	-	Natal
<b>Michaelhouse</b>	-	4	-	4	Anglican	Natal
<b>St John's College</b>	-	4	-	4	Anglican	Transvaal
<b>Hilton College</b>	-	2	1	3	Anglican	Natal
<b>Jeppe BHS</b>	-	2	1	3	Government (Milner)	Transvaal
<b>Paarl BHS</b>	4	-	-	4	Government (Dual Medium)	Western Cape
<b>De Villiers Graaff HS</b>	-	1	1	2	Dual Medium	Western Cape
<b>Grey's College</b>	2	-	-	2	Collegiate (Afrikaans)	Free State
<b>Parktown BHS</b>	-	2	-	2	Government (English)	Transvaal
<b>Rondebosch BHS</b>	1	1	-	2	Government (English)	Western Cape

A survey of the scholastic experiences of ex-servicemen referred to in Table 2.3 shows that a substantial number involved in post-war politics had similar schooling, which may have shaped their disposition before the war and may have contributed to their politicisation during and after the war. The following discussion traces how the schools influenced the pupils', old boys' and teachers' disposition towards volunteering to serve in the war.

The schools, unashamedly Archaic Victorian in nature, sustained the aura of Britishness by sourcing teachers mainly from England and Scotland after the First World War.<sup>572</sup> Inadvertently, the imported schoolmasters, many educated in England after the Great War, brought with them new ideas of

<sup>570</sup> Table developed by Author from DOD Archive, PA; UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information, File 35, Biographies 1951-1976; UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information, File 65 1 5 (part 2), General Election 1953 UP Candidates Information; South African Who's Who 1948-1976, 1977; 'Bishops War Record,' *Diocesan College Magazine*, XXXV, no. 3 (1950), 70-99; UNISA-UP Archives, UP Private Papers Sir De Villiers Graaff Papers (United Party Papers 1958-1977), File 1.15.11, 'United Party Personalities', J Illsely, *Pretoria Boys High The Story of a South African School* (Pretoria: Pretoria Boys High School, 2000); AM Barret, 'A History of Michaelhouse, 1896-1952' (Masters dissertation, University of Natal, 1968); D Armstrong, 'Class reunions - November 2014' *Strenue*, (December 2014). Available: <http://www.kes.co.za/strenue/strenue-december-2014/#section-18880> [Accessed: 23 July 2019]

<sup>571</sup> Other Elite Schools that had single ex-servicemen include: Gill College, Kersney College, Kimberley BHS, Kingswood College, Selborne, St Andrew's College. Twelve Ex-servicemen were schooled in foreign Countries.

<sup>572</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A3299 E1, Hilder and Rusty Bernstein Papers, 'Interview by Terri Barnes for the ANC / University of Connecticut Oral History Project, Cape Town, 28 February 2001'; Bernstein, *Memory Against Forgetting*, 3; Graaff, *Div Looks Back*, 28-29; Randall, 'The English Private School System in South Africa,' 228.

social justice and equity that were gaining traction in post-war Britain at the time. At Bishop's, Reverend Birt, an Oxford graduate, was headmaster from 1919 to 1943.<sup>573</sup> At Hilton College, in 1928, only one teacher, the Afrikaans master, was from a South African University, the rest had graduated in Britain.<sup>574</sup> At Michaelhouse, Elred Pascoe, a Cambridge graduate, was appointed rector in 1917 and between the wars slowly reduced the school's dependency on British graduates.<sup>575</sup> James Lang, a master at PBHS and later rector at Grey's School was originally from Scotland.<sup>576</sup> Cecil Williams<sup>577</sup> came from Cornwall in 1928 and taught at KES and PBHS after completing his degree at Wits.<sup>578</sup>

At elite schools, pupils held teachers in high esteem, which allowed the teachers to influence their charges' political dispositions. As a pupil at KES, Bernstein, experienced his school teacher, Williams, as "outspokenly iconoclastic and immensely popular with the boys".<sup>579</sup> Bernstein who later studied at Hilton College noted that the College imported "their teachers from British universities and they had a few very good teachers including one<sup>580</sup> who really introduced [him] to the question of fascism because he had been an active anti-fascist in Britain".<sup>581</sup> Bernstein further added that "[s]ome of his hatred of fascism must have come away with me".<sup>582</sup> The Rector of Michaelhouse, Fredrick Snell, who had studied at Oxford, had brought a liberal influence to Michaelhouse.<sup>583</sup> He introduced an exchange programme between Michaelhouse and Adams College<sup>584</sup> and instituted race relations as a post-matric subject.<sup>585</sup> Brown was substantially influenced by these liberal currents and innovations that occurred at Michaelhouse while he was a pupil.<sup>586</sup> At Diocesan (Bishops) College the Deputy Headmaster, Captain Hubert Kidd, established a debating club, which allowed pupils to explore politics. Graaff, as a member of the club, developed his political thought and "found it the most worthwhile thing I did at school".<sup>587</sup>

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<sup>573</sup> Randall, 'The English Private School System in South Africa', 229.

<sup>574</sup> Randall, 236.

<sup>575</sup> Barret, 'A History of Michaelhouse, 1896-1952', 75, 124.

<sup>576</sup> See Illsely, *Pretoria Boys High The Story of a South African School*.

<sup>577</sup> Cecil Williams became a prominent member of the Springbok Legion, Communist Party and MK. He was famously arrested with Nelson Mandela, posing as his chauffeur.

<sup>578</sup> 'Proud Record', *Fighting Talk* (September 1951), 1, 10.

<sup>579</sup> Bernstein, *Memory Against Forgetting*, 347; Micheal Picardie experienced a similar radicalising experience at KES during the history classes of Teddy Gordon in the 1950s. See Lazerson, *Against the Tide*, 95.

<sup>580</sup> Bernstein, *Memory Against Forgetting*, 3. Cesar Jenks' was one of the Oxbridge generations that was anti-Nazi and critical of Chamberlain's policy of appeasement.

<sup>581</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A3299 E1, Hilder and Rusty Bernstein Papers, 'Interview by Terri Barnes for the ANC / University of Connecticut Oral History Project, Cape Town, 28 February 2001'.

<sup>582</sup> Bernstein, *Memory Against Forgetting*, 3.

<sup>583</sup> Cardo, *Opening Men's Eyes*, 30.

<sup>584</sup> Cardo, 31. Adam College includes John Dube, Pixley ka Seme and Albert Luthuli as alumni.

<sup>585</sup> APC, OHP 'Interview with Peter Brown by Norman Bromberger'; Cardo, *Opening Men's Eyes*, 31; Barret, 'A History of Michaelhouse, 1896-1952', 152, 162.

<sup>586</sup> Cardo, *Opening Men's Eyes*, 30.

<sup>587</sup> Graaff, *Div Looks Back*, 29.

Less prestigious government schools had also sought teachers from abroad, who had similar effects on their charges. John O'Meara, a militant teacher of Irish origin, influenced Joe Slovo, a Jewish pupil, during his time at the Observatory Junior High School.<sup>588</sup> Slovo recalls that O'Meara "took me along to the junior left book club, and that was the first time that I actually sat next to a black man."..<sup>589</sup> The liberalising efforts of these teachers were endorsed when Lord Harlech (William Ormsby-Gore), the High Commissioner to South Africa, at a Speech Day at Michaelhouse, on 1 October 1942, predicted that war would cause a move towards the political left in South Africa, and that "racial relations have got to be put on a better footing".<sup>590</sup>

Often teachers were also transferred and promoted between the schools. James Lang, father of John and Colin Lang, was a respected deputy Headmaster at PBHS before accepting the Rectorship of Grey's School in Port Elizabeth in 1934.<sup>591</sup> In 1940, AD McDonald left PBHS to become the headmaster of Potchefstroom Boys High School.<sup>592</sup> Ronald Currie, the first South African rector at Michaelhouse, was transferred between Michaelhouse and St Andrews College in Grahamstown during the war.<sup>593</sup> The resulting consistency in the schooling system, allows for the generalisation of specific observations.

When the war broke out, the teachers reinforced the masculine ethos of the schools by volunteering to fight in such large numbers that the elite schools faced staffing difficulties. By 1940, the volunteering of ten masters from JHSB prompted the school's Governing Board to institute measures to stop the deluge of teachers.<sup>594</sup> From PBHS, 12 masters volunteered of which only half were permitted to join up.<sup>595</sup> By 1941 the Rector of Michaelhouse reported that more than a third of his 1940 staff complement was on active service.<sup>596</sup> In the group under consideration, eight schoolmasters joined up.<sup>597</sup> To cope with the shortage of male teachers, schools received special dispensation to employ female teachers temporarily.<sup>598</sup>

The senior boys, some not waiting to matriculate, shortly followed their masters into service. The PBHS school magazine lamented in 1941 that "[w]e were scarcely settled for a good year's work

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<sup>588</sup> Rhodes University. 'History of Joe Slovo' (2019). Available: <https://www.ru.ac.za/lilianngoyi/joeslovo/historyofjoeslovo/> [Accessed: 25 September 2019].

<sup>589</sup> SAHA, AL2460, 'Interview with Joe Slovo by J Fredrickse'.

<sup>590</sup> Cardo, *Opening Men's Eyes*, 35.

<sup>591</sup> Illsely, *Pretoria Boys High*, 92.

<sup>592</sup> Illsely, 92.

<sup>593</sup> APC, OHP 'Interview with Peter Brown by Norman Bromberger'.

<sup>594</sup> D Etheridge, 'Childe's Jeppe, 1937-1943', in H Cunningham and N Mitchell (eds.), *A History of Jeppe High School for Boys 1890-1990* (Johannesburg: Jeppe Schools', 1990), 18.

<sup>595</sup> Illsely, *Pretoria Boys High*, 90.

<sup>596</sup> Barret, 'A History of Michaelhouse, 1896-1952', 142.

<sup>597</sup> These were C Williams (KES), JJ O'Meara (Observatory Junior High School), PA Moore, KC McIntyre, AC Martins (Escort High School), Leo Marquard (Grey's College), Rev JB Chutter (Michaelhouse), and VCH Brown. See DOD Archive, PA.

<sup>598</sup> Illsely, *Pretoria Boys High*, 90; Barret, 'A History of Michaelhouse, 1896-1952', 143.

when a number of our most experienced and enthusiastic Student Officers and NCOs left in order to join some branch of the Fighting Services.”<sup>599</sup>

As the war progressed the call to service, embedded in the school ethos and dutifully answered by schoolmasters, old boys and fellow pupils, it incited the younger boys who were too young to volunteer to complain that, “for the younger of us there were many pangs of envy as we saw our seniors go off to join the forces. As the war developed we awaited our turn to get into uniform and join them”.<sup>600</sup> The call-to-arms mobilised 50 per cent of Michaelhouse Old Boys, and over 1 000 KES Old Boys served in the Transvaal Scottish regiment alone.<sup>601</sup> Enough PBHS Old Boys (Phobians) had volunteered that in POW camps 35 and 47 in Italy, there were sufficient to establish an old boys’ association in each camp.<sup>602</sup> Furthermore, in Camp 47 there were sufficient old boys from Hilton College and Michaelhouse to organise an ‘inter-school’ baseball match.<sup>603</sup>

At home, the schools lionised the serving old boys in their magazines, which kept a careful tally of the old boys’ movements and adventures.<sup>604</sup> School magazines published past pupils’ letters, movements and promotions regularly, for instance Vause Raw was among the old boys from PBHS, who wrote periodically to his alma mater. Even today these schools have continued to nurture the traditions of remembrance established after the Great War, adding the fallen to their ‘Roll of Honour’ (indicated in Table 2.4) and keeping count of their heroes’ decorations and medals.

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<sup>599</sup> Illsely, *Pretoria Boys High*, 96.

<sup>600</sup> Illsely, 97.

<sup>601</sup> Lambert, ‘Their Finest Hour?’, 73.

<sup>602</sup> Illsely, *Pretoria Boys High*, 99.

<sup>603</sup> Barret, ‘A History of Michaelhouse, 1896-1952’, 137.

<sup>604</sup> Barret, 138.



**Table 2.4: Decorations and medals of ‘Old Boys’ of Prominent Schools**

Decorations and medals	Michael house <sup>605</sup>	Jeppe <sup>606</sup>	KES <sup>607</sup>	PBHS <sup>608</sup>	Bishops <sup>609</sup>
<b>DSO</b>	6	3	9	4	7 (1 bar)
<b>MC</b>	13	6	17	10	19
<b>DFC</b>	20 (2 bars to DFC)	11	37 (4 bars to DFC)	15 (1 Bar to DFC)	27 (3 Bars to DFC)
<b>DSC</b>	1	1	2	0	4
<b>AFC</b>	1	1	3	1	3
<b>DFM</b>	-	1	3	-	-
<b>DSM</b>	1	-	1	-	1
<b>MM</b>	6	4	4	4	4
<b>DCM</b>	1	1	1	1	1
<b>BEM</b>	2	-	-	-	1
<b>George Medal</b>	-	-	1	-	-
<b>Kings Medal for Bravery</b>	1	-	-	-	-
<b>CMG</b>	1	-	-	-	-
<b>GCB</b>	-	-	-	-	1
<b>KCB</b>	-	-	-	-	1
<b>KBE</b>	-	-	-	-	1
<b>CBE</b>	2	-	2	-	4
<b>CB</b>	1	-	-	-	3
<b>OBE</b>	9	2	10	3	15
<b>MBE</b>	7	-	14	3	13
<b>Soldiers</b>	About 1205	Over 2000	Over 2000	1600	1532

As in the Great War, the South African elite schools provided soldiers to the war efforts. The school not only shaped the habitus of the pupils towards values of service and duty but inadvertently provided an environment for the pupils to develop independent, possibly liberal political views. Additionally, the old boy's connections gave them access to social capital that had a 'middling effect' on their social status and attitude, which framed their military experience. The schooling system gave these men both the will and means to pursue meaningful political careers after the war.

### 2.2.3 Age of volunteers

Age can be a determining factor of both habitus and social capital. As discussed previously, age solidifies the habitus, and the passing of time allows for the accumulation of various forms of social and economic capital. The age of a recruit can thus provide an indicator of both his social class and his disposition. The need for manpower and the UDF's recruitment practices meant that, unlike

<sup>605</sup> Barret, 'A History of Michaelhouse, 1896-1952', 135 note 9, 12.

<sup>606</sup> Plaque in Jeppe Boys High School hall entrance.

<sup>607</sup> Digby, 'From Playing Field to Parade Ground'.

<sup>608</sup> Illsely, *Pretoria Boys High*, 254.

<sup>609</sup> 'Bishops War Record', 70-99. Additional decorations and medals were added to the list after 1950, as they were awarded or became known.

conscription, men and later women of all ages were recruited, trained and deployed together, which allowed for both inter-generational and inter-class engagement.

As indicated earlier in Table 2.1 and Table 2.2, the majority of volunteers joined in the first two years of the war, leaving the pool of White men depleted for recruitment in later years. In the early years, both old and young men volunteered to fight “up north”. In some cases, all the adults in a household volunteered. For instance, Malherbe, his wife Janie, his two sons and his father, a 70-year-old veteran of the Anglo Boer war, all joined the war effort.<sup>610</sup> Hain’s father and two older brothers enlisted immediately, and he joined later when he turned 18.<sup>611</sup> Helen Joseph’s father (RAF), brother (British Army) and husband (UDF) had volunteered before she joined the South African Woman’s Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF).<sup>612</sup> For the war-supporter, their commitment was both individual and reinforced by a broader family and community network.

Older volunteers, eager to participate, attempted to evade recruitment and utilisation restrictions by volunteering to forgo their ranks or by lying about their age. Van der Spuy, the South African Military Advisor in London at the time, faced the challenge of interviewing retired South African officers. Some were as old as seventy and eighty. Despite their age, they who were willing to forgo their previous ranks to re-enlist as privates in the Home Guard.<sup>613</sup> Aaron Berman, a Cape Town City Councillor, when enlisting in 1940, understated his age by seven years in order to experience combat in East Africa. After returning to South Africa, he secured a transfer to the British Army (who were less rigid regarding age) so that he could see combat duty in Europe. He reunited with his son, who had been captured at Tobruk, in Mortara in Italy in 1944.<sup>614</sup> Lovell, when meeting one of his old schoolmasters, Mr Gamble, in the North African desert, was “careful not to ask him what age he had inserted in his recruitment papers!”<sup>615</sup>

On the opposite extreme, youths were willing to add years to their age to avoid securing their guardian’s permission to volunteer. Scholars and students who either had finished or abandoned their studies tried their luck to deceive the recruiters. As the recruitment pool depleted, the number of youths who successfully ‘duped’ the recruitment officers increased. Carneson willingly added years to his age in order to join up.<sup>616</sup> Also, Brokensha later noted how complacent the recruiting officers were when he joined in 1940:

I put the date of my birth back a year, making it 23 May 1922 (instead of 1923). The recruiting sergeant drily remarked we had a clever mother as the age difference on our forms showed an

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<sup>610</sup> Malherbe, *Never a Dull Moment*, 211.

<sup>611</sup> Hain, *Ad and Wal*, 5.

<sup>612</sup> Joseph, *Side by Side*, 25-26.

<sup>613</sup> Van der Spuy, *Chasing the Wind*, 214.

<sup>614</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *South African Jews in World War Two*, 63.

<sup>615</sup> Lovell, *For the Love of Justice*, 23.

<sup>616</sup> Carneson, *Red in the Rainbow*, 86.

interval of only six months, but he cheerfully admitted us to the Second South African Division Signal Company, allocating us our army numbers, 3738 for me, 3739 for Paul.<sup>617</sup>

In 1943, Slovo, who was 18 years old at the time, went to volunteer against his father's wishes. Slovo, along with other two young 'comrades', added years to their age to avoid securing their parents' consent.<sup>618</sup> Brown, who joined up in 1942 recalls that one of the men who volunteered with him even went so far as to change his name:

There was one chap, about my age, that was with us right through, and after about two years or something, they suddenly discovered that he'd joined up under a false name -because his parents didn't want him to.<sup>619</sup>

The broad spread of age evident in the volunteer army allowed for inter-generational networking among the servicemen as was evident in Brokensha's experiences:

At one early-morning [toilet] session I was joined by Bill Payn, a popular teacher at Durban High School, who had joined the army despite being forty years old. Mr Payn jollied me out of my discomfort, saying, 'Dave, everyone has to shit, and this is the way we do it in the army. You will get used to it.' Although I never really got used to it, it did become less upsetting.

Another significant new friend was Leslie Rubin, an attorney in Durban. Many years later, when I asked what he recalled, Leslie wrote to me: "I remember the day, not long after I had joined up, when [your father] whom I knew well as a senior colleague – Brokensha and Higgs was one of the older legal firms in Durban – came up to me as I was on my way to court, and said he had heard I was with the Second Division Signal Company. 'My two boys are in the same unit and I would appreciate it if you would keep an eye on them.' I sought out Paul and David..."<sup>620</sup>

The sample group being ex-servicemen who became involved in post-war politics reflects the broader experience, as indicated in Table 2.5. In the initial wave, the volunteers' ages varied widely between under-20 to over-61 years of age. The majority of volunteers were between 21 and 35 years of age. As the war progressed, and the recruitment pool became depleted, both the number of volunteers reduced and the age distribution narrowed and became younger. The age distribution of these men indicates that support for the war was intergenerational and that older soldiers were in a position, within the military context, to influence the opinions and dispositions of younger comrades.

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<sup>617</sup> Brokensha, *Brokies Way*.

<sup>618</sup> Slovo, *Slovo: The Unfinished Autobiography*, 27.

<sup>619</sup> APC, OHP 'Interview with Peter Brown by Norman Bromberger'.

<sup>620</sup> Brokensha, *Brokies Way*.

**Table 2.5: Sample group's age and year of volunteering for war service (n=153)<sup>621</sup>**

		Age at volunteering										Total
		16-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-55	56-60	61-65	
Year of volunteering	1939	4	3	5	6	3	3	4	-	-	1	29
	1940	6	20	17	13	9	5	4	1	-	-	75
	1941	2	6	2	3	1	-	1	-	-	-	15
	1942	4	3	2	2	1	-	1	-	1	-	14
	1943	5	3	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	12
	1944	4	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	7
	1945	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Total		26	36	29	25	15	9	10	1	1	1	153

The depletion of the White male population had other consequences. The UDF's measure to mitigate the shortfall of White men on the front-lines undermined White masculine hegemony. In January 1941, a new medical category was applied, which made it difficult to discharge anyone on the grounds of being medically unfit. A 'Steel Commando' recruitment campaign toured the rural areas, and recruiters pushed for a second campaign.<sup>622</sup> In order to release able-bodied men for combat, women and Black soldiers increasingly filled non-combat roles. Increased pressure was placed on Lieutenant Colonel (Mrs) Reintge Lugtenburg and Lieutenant Colonel (Mrs) Doreen Dunning to recruit more women. The resulting efforts led to the recruitment in 1942 of Ms Jacqueline de Villiers and Ms Joseph, two women that would rise to political prominence after the war as WAAF information officers.<sup>623</sup>

The encompassing nature of volunteerism in the UDF created an intersection for people of ethnicity, gender and age. However, the intergenerational transfer of habitus was not the only characteristic of a volunteer force. Social capital, in the form of occupation, accompanied the volunteer into the military.

### 2.3 OCCUPATION OF VOLUNTEERS

The urgency of the initial mobilisation of forces not only meant diversity in age and culture of the volunteers but also meant that the volunteers came from a wide range of occupational classes. Occupation, often a culmination of schooling and education, provides an indicator for social class. Part of the enlistment process required candidates to indicate their occupations. Although occupation may not have guaranteed a commission or better appointments, as a part of the habitus, it did contribute to how the servicemen interpreted their military service.

<sup>621</sup> Table developed by Author from DOD Archive, PA. Permanent Force soldiers and soldiers already in the UDF (ACF) were treated as volunteers for war service in 1939.

<sup>622</sup> Martin and Orpen, *South Africa at War*, 105.

<sup>623</sup> DOD Archive, PA, Personnel Service Files, de Villiers f268744, and Joseph f268727.

Fennell determined the social standings of the enlisted British soldier in comparison to other Commonwealth soldiers by classifying soldiers according to their occupation, as indicated in Table 2.6. He adopted the UK Ministry of Labour occupational categories. In his comparison, the UDF soldiers seem to have come from a broader cross-section of society and on average were better skilled.<sup>624</sup> The skill difference between the UDF and British Army recruits is even more marked when considering that skilled artisans had been declared key men and were ‘combed out’ of the regiments and returned to the industry after they had volunteered. The UDF’s exclusion of key men may have biased the representation of these occupations within the UDF.

In Table 2.6 the occupations of the sample group of politicians with war service (using data extracted from primarily service records and political party curriculum vita) are sorted according to Fennell’s categorisation and compared to Fennell’s study. The data suggests that the group came from predominantly professional and intermediate occupational groups.

**Table 2.6: Occupational class of Second World War soldiers**

Class	Occupations <sup>625</sup>	UK soldiers <sup>626</sup>	UDF soldiers <sup>627</sup>	Political ex-servicemen <sup>628</sup> (Sample Group n = 153)
<b>Professional</b>	doctors, dentists, engineers, writers	0,9%	3,1%	28%
<b>Intermediate</b>	pharmacists, chemists, teachers, editorial staff	4,4%	8%	41%
<b>Skilled</b>	shop assistances, clerks, lorry drivers (SA only Farmers)	68,4%	74,6%	20%
<b>Semi-skilled</b>	caretakers, railway porters, land workers	11,3%	9,6%	0%
<b>Non skilled</b>	labourers, factory workers, cleaners	15,1%	4,8%	0%
<b>Unknown</b>		0%	0%	10%

Using the data mentioned above, Table 2.7 triangulates occupation with the date of attestation. The distribution of occupational class over time reinforces the trend identified regarding age in Table 2.5. As with the distribution of age, the distribution of occupation was more diverse among the earlier volunteers (1939-1940) than the later volunteers (1941-1945), confirming the UDF had depleted the

<sup>624</sup> Fennell, *Fighting the People’s War*, 186–87.

<sup>625</sup> Fennell, 186–87.

<sup>626</sup> Fennell, 187.

<sup>627</sup> Fennell, 189–90.

<sup>628</sup> Commissioned Permanent Force Officers, students and scholars are included in the intermediate occupations. Farmers are included in skilled occupations to be consistent with Fennell’s methodology. Other agricultural occupations are included in the intermediate occupations. Where occupations were left blank on service cards, occupational classes were derived from UP *Curriculum Vita*, Biographies and Obituaries.

recruitment pool early in the war and became more dependent on scholars and students to replenish the forces as the war progressed.

**Table 2.7: Occupational class and year of volunteering of ex-servicemen politicians (n=153)<sup>629</sup>**

	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	Total
<b>Professional</b>	5	26	5	4	1	2	-	43
<b>Intermediate</b>	17	18	5	9	9	4	1	63
<b>Scholars and Students</b>	1	4	1	4	4	3	1	18
<b>Skilled</b>	1	23	4	1	1	1	-	31
<b>Unknown</b>	6	8	1	-	1	-	-	16
<b>Total</b>	29	75	15	14	12	7	1	153

The South African soldiers came from a generally higher occupational class than those conscripted into the British armed forces. Furthermore, the volunteer that would become involved in post-war politics came predominantly from the skilled and professional occupations. The volunteers' transition from highly skilled pre-war occupations into the military environment exposed them to a different class and ethnic perspectives. The drastic change in context and status allowed for a recalibration of ideas and concepts which they had previously held as gospel. Such exposure may have broadened and deepened their political perspectives, making them more aware of the social injustices and divisions.

## 2.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided a broad survey of the demographics of the South African politicians that fought in the Second World War. The rise of fascism in Europe and South Africa's declaration of war in 1939 further exacerbated the divisions that existed from the onset of the union in 1910. These divisions allowed for the identification of three distinct communities in South Africa, the Afrikaans-speaking, the English-speaking and the Jewish communities. Within the Afrikaans-speaking community, the Afrikaner nationalists were quick to undermine Afrikaner support for the war. However, despite their violent efforts to discourage their fellow Afrikaners from supporting the war, a significant number of Afrikaners volunteered to fight. Their motivations, however, ranged from higher principles to escaping poverty, or just adventure. Where the Afrikaans-speaking community stood divided during the war, the English-speaking and Jewish-speaking communities supported the war effort. Where the Jewish community reacted to rising antisemitism, the motivation of the English-speaking community's commitment was more nuanced, based on a complex interrelationship between their past, culture and religion.

<sup>629</sup> Commissioned Permanent Force Officers, students and scholars are included in the intermediate occupations. Farmers are included in skilled occupations in order to be consistent with Fennell's methodology. Other agricultural occupations are included in the intermediate occupations. Where occupations were left blank on service cards, occupational classes were derived from UP *Curriculum Vita*, Biographies and Obituaries.



The English school system encapsulated the complexities of the English-speaking community habitus formation, and also reinforced views regarding duty, masculinity and class. A substantial number of politically prominent ex-servicemen, English, Afrikaans and Jewish, attended these schools and had similar recollections. The rituals and rigours of these schools instilled at least a sense of duty into the boys and provided a framework for independent and inquisitorial thought. The link between school and military service during the First World War, identified by Lambert, persisted into the next war.

The age of volunteers had a wide range during the first two years of the war but narrowed as the recruitment pool dried up. The average age also declined. In terms of age and date of attestation, the group is reflective of the general trend. However, the group included 11 permanent force soldiers who were in service at the start of the war. The broad age distribution allowed for an inter-generational exchange of ideas.

The occupations of the volunteers were diverse. Within the UDF the volunteer soldier was better qualified than his conscripted British Army compatriot. Likewise, the volunteers that were to become active in post-war politics had either secured access to or were already in a better occupation than their comrades in the UDF. In selected occupations, such as medical and engineering, these occupations secured the volunteer military status. Otherwise manning the combat forces took priority over the qualifications of the volunteer, which the volunteers accepted.

The general biographic profile of the ex-serviceman politician reflects the broader society from which they volunteered. The Afrikaans-speakers, however, tended to be 'South Africanists' who shared interlocking networks with the English-speaking community such as similar schooling and loyalty to Smuts and the United Party. The English-speaker and the Jewish volunteers harboured a similar revulsion towards fascism and authoritarianism. Furthermore, the schooling and occupations of the group suggest that the group had strong middle-class affiliations and experienced themselves as part of the dominant hegemony. The habitus of the group made them susceptible to liberal and anti-authoritarian ideologies even before the war.

Volunteering threw men and women from different cultural backgrounds, of different ages and different classes and occupations into the meat grinder of war. War's near-total disregard for class, education, occupation, and culture created conditions which would allow for the construction of a shared identity which intersected culture, class and generation. The new identity of the South African soldier, as suggested by Tylden, would form ex-servicemen and women that were "quick to size up a tactical situation, and [was] intensely critical ... [and] ... inclined to think themselves as good as their officers".<sup>630</sup> Chapter Three addresses the ways in which the war shaped the political views of these ex-servicemen.

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<sup>630</sup> Tylden, *The Armed Forces of South Africa*, 30.

## CHAPTER THREE: THE MILITARY SERVICE OF POLITICALLY ACTIVE EX-SERVICEMEN

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### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter discussed the biographic profile of the men under consideration before they volunteered for war service. The various biographic profiles highlight the similarities and differences between their foundational habitus before the war. The chapter provided insight into how the volunteers' disposition before the war shaped their war experience and influenced their later political disposition. During the war period, some individuals like George Calpin, the editor of the *Natal Witness*, hoped that the experience of war would displace the divisions in race and class.

A more encouraging note can be struck by reference to the good fellowship that existed and exists between the two sections of the army itself. For the first time the unilingual English Natalian, urban born and bred, came into close contact with his unilingual Afrikaner fellow, possibly of the Orange Free State and the veld, and to everyone's knowledge developed friendships that may well be to the powerful and lasting good of the South African whole, even as it is fruitful in the success of the South African armies in the field of battle. The growth of the nation, though recorded in legal enactments and social statutes, is a slow process of the intangibles turning the tangibles. Among those intangibles in South Africa are the goodly fellowships between men of different races and widely different social status.<sup>631</sup>

As previously discussed, Geoffrey Tylden had proposed that a uniquely South African military typology had emerged from the war, an idea that Randolph Vigne expanded further to include a particular liberal political perspective.<sup>632</sup> Thus, there was hope that the melting pot of war service would bring the divided South African society together, and that such engagement would lead to the creation of a unified typology, possibly with political implications.

The view that wartime service, with the discipline, comradeship, and danger that accompanies combat had forged an ex-serviceman identity and typology was not unique to the Second World War. After the First World War, to give meaning to the carnage, the 'South Africanists' had constructed a national mythology, based on combat experience. Bill Nasson describes the effect:

Moreover, for those attached to Jan Smuts and Louis Botha's cause of constructing the new post-1910 Union of South Africa as a British Dominion based upon a unified white nationalism, the Somme carnage represented a rich historical transition. Shoulder to shoulder in battle, English and Afrikaner had finally found each other. However heavy the loss at Delville Wood, its 'unifying blood sacrifice' had helped to seal the shared European citizenship of previously fractured English and Afrikaner community.<sup>633</sup>

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<sup>631</sup> Calpin, *There Are No South Africans*, 368.

<sup>632</sup> Tylden, *The Armed Forces of South Africa*, 30; Vigne, *Liberals Against Apartheid*, 4–5.

<sup>633</sup> B Nasson, 'Delville Wood and South African Great War Commemoration', *The English Historical Review*, 119, no. 480 (2004), 63.

The First World War had mixed the various South African cultures, fleetingly constructing a common White ‘South Africanism’. The 4 SA Infantry Battalion (South African Scottish) seamlessly appropriated war cries from the Zulu nation, *volksliede* (cultural songs) from the Afrikaners and the bagpipes and kilt from Scots, rounding it off with the regimental mascot, a Springbuck called Nancy. The various White South African communities, English, Irish, Welsh, Jew, Afrikaner and Polish, were initiated into this Afro-Gaelic mix.<sup>634</sup> The South African press lauded these men’s suffering and loss. Their blood sacrifice was needed to unify the White communities of South Africa and to inoculate it “against the debilitating virus” of Afrikaner Nationalism and isolationism.<sup>635</sup>

The soldiers’ appropriation and merging of numerous cultural totems, such as kilts, Zulu war-cries and African animals (Springbuck) as regimental mascots, created a uniquely South African dominion identity separate from the rest of the Empire. The soldiers fought a dogged defence against German aggression, constructing a myth of daring, mobility, bravery, and unrelenting resistance or *bittereinder* from the ashes of Deville Wood.<sup>636</sup> Similarly, the Great War provided other dominions in the British Empire with unique military mythologies on which to build their national identity, such as Australia at Gallipoli and Canada at Vimy Ridge.<sup>637</sup> War experience had allowed the emergence of dominion identities separate from an overarching British identity. In South Africa, the construction of a shared national military character had obscured fermenting tensions in the White society.<sup>638</sup>

Smuts probably hoped to build on Deville Wood’s mythology to bind the White community together with a common martial tradition. He expressed this sentiment to the soldiers of the 1 South African Brigade (1 SA Bde) on their departure for East Africa in July 1940:

You are going to face danger, hardship and sacrifice – perhaps death itself – in all its fierce forms. But through it all you will gather that experience of life and enrichment of character which are more valuable than gold or precious stones. You will become better and stronger men. You will not return the same as you went. You will bring back memories that you and yours will treasure for life.<sup>639</sup>

When analysing the political, socialising influence of the war on servicemen that later became politically active, this chapter explores three issues. First, it explores the structural stratification of the UDF in terms of service and rank. Second, it analyses the influence of the different theatres of operations and POW status on the servicemen. Finally, it discusses the deliberate efforts to influence

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<sup>634</sup> Nasson, ‘Deville Wood and South African Great War Commemoration’, 63; Hyslop, ‘Cape Town Highlanders, Transvaal Scottish: Military ‘Scottishness’ and Social Power in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century South Africa’, 98.

<sup>635</sup> Nasson, ‘Deville Wood and South African Great War Commemoration’, 62–63.

<sup>636</sup> Nasson, 61.

<sup>637</sup> Nasson, 63.

<sup>638</sup> Lambert, ‘South African British?’, 214–16.

<sup>639</sup> Martin and Orpen, *South Africa at War*, 15–16.

soldiers, which may have edged servicemen into post-war politics, such as membership of the Springbok Legion (SL) and Army Education Scheme (AES).

### 3.2 SERVICE AND RANK

Military organisations are hierarchal and stratified, both vertically and horizontally. Vertical structural divisions relate mostly to domains of warfare, with specific services, Army, Air Force and Navy, primarily responsible for activities in their respective domains. A dominant hierarchal structure of officers and Non-Commissioned Officers (NCO) creates two distinct classes within the military, the leaders and the ordinary soldiers. Further differentiation occurs between combat, combat support and support echelons.<sup>640</sup> Each distinction generates entitlements and cultural totems which, when layered, creates distinct military identities within a broader military culture. The most dominant military organisations are the services, and within these, the most rigid and persistent class distinction is between the men and the officers.<sup>641</sup>

#### 3.2.1 Service

Within the UDF, the Army was the largest and most dominant service. The Army, although based on the British Army in training and doctrine, had a distinctly South African culture. As indicated in the previous chapter, the Union Defence Force (UDF) depended exclusively on volunteers, many of whom were leaders in their occupations, thereby making the South African Army more democratic and less authoritarian than its British counterparts. Carel Birkby, a war correspondent, recounted that Major General Douglas Dickinson, the commander of the British troops in East Africa, commented to him on the culture of the UDF, “They’re democratic, to say the least of it”.<sup>642</sup> As a result, the South African soldier was probably more politically aware than soldiers in a conscript army.<sup>643</sup>

The South African Air Force (SAAF), although the darling of the Chief of General Staff (CGS), Sir Pierre van Ryneveld, was at the start of the war a mere extension of the Army. South Africans who were unable to join the South African Air Force (SAAF) as pilots before the war often joined the Royal Air Force (RAF). Twenty-one South African pilots, including Sailor Malan, fought in the Battle of Britain in 1940 as part of the RAF.<sup>644</sup> During the war, the SAAF rapidly expanded and became infused with a culture like the RAF. The Seaward Defence Force (SDF), born out of tensions between the Royal Navy and the UDF, incorporated the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve (South Africa)

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<sup>640</sup> Greenbank, ‘You Chaps Mustn’t Worry When You Come Back’, 16.

<sup>641</sup> L Cooper *et al.*, ‘Transition From the Military Into Civilian Life’, *Armed Forces & Society*, 44, no. 1 (2018), 165; J Mcdermott, ‘Old Soldiers Never Die: They Adapt Their Military Skills and Become Successful Civilians’ (PhD Thesis, University of Leicester, 2007), 31.

<sup>642</sup> Birkby, *Springbok Victory*, 24.

<sup>643</sup> Malherbe, ‘Race Attitudes and Education’, 1.

<sup>644</sup> Van der Waag, *A Military History of Modern South Africa*, 186.

(RNVR(SA)) into the UDF formation and appropriated the cultural traditions of the Royal Navy.<sup>645</sup> Although the UDF comprised different services, the Army as the senior service set the cultural tone for the South African military.

Not only was the Army the senior service, but also the largest. The distribution of White men between the services (Permanent Force and Active Citizen Force (ACF)) before the war was approximately 21 414 men, of which 18 872 were in the Army, 1 736 in the SAAF, and 806 men in the naval forces (RNVR(SA) 800 men and 6 in the SA Naval Service). During the war, the numbers increased dramatically to 132 194 White men in the Army, 44 569 in the SAAF and 9 455 in the SDF. The rapid expansion of the SAAF can be better appreciated when considering not only the 40-fold increase in numbers, but also the relative increase to the size of the total force, from 8 per cent to 24 per cent as a proportion of the whole UDF. The number of South Africans in the RNVR (SA) obscures the similar expansion in naval capacity.

**Table 3.1: UDF personnel according to service 1939-1945<sup>646</sup>**

	Army	SAAF	SANF and RNVR(S.A.)	Total
<b>1939</b>	18872 (88%)	1736 (8%)	806 (4%)	21414
<b>1945</b>	132194 (71%)	44569 (24%)	9455 (5%)	186218
<b>Ex Servicemen in sample n=153</b>	112 (73%)	37 (24%)	4(3%)	153

Table 3.1 presents the service representation of the sample group of 153 ex-servicemen. Interestingly, the sample group is distributed proportionately between the services, which suggest that despite the smaller services having developed separate cultural identities during the war, these nascent identities did not deviate far from the dominant military identity in terms of politicisation.

### 3.2.2 Rank

Within the military, the second cultural divider is rank, which horizontally stratifies the organisation. In the hierarchal system, embodied by the rank structures, the position of rank becomes an overt marker of status within a hierarchal class system. The rank hierarchy institutionalises barriers between officers and men, with men expected to defer to the authority of officers. Officers and senior NCO's are expected to provide leadership and enforce discipline on the NCO and soldiers.<sup>647</sup> In 1939 the UDF officer corps constituted a small component of the overall force. Within the permanent force in 1939, only one man in 14 was an officer. In the SAAF, as a technical service, the ratio was one in 12.<sup>648</sup>

<sup>645</sup> I van der Waag, 'The Thin Edge of the Wedge': Anglo-South African Relations, Dominion Nationalism and the Formation of the Seaward Defence Force in 1939-1940', *Contemporary British History*, 24, no. 4 (2010), 442.

<sup>646</sup> Van der Waag, *A Military History of Modern South Africa*, 176, 185; DOD Archive, PA.

<sup>647</sup> Mcdermott, 'Old Soldiers Never Die', 26.

<sup>648</sup> Martin and Orpen, *South Africa at War*, 27-28.

As indicated in Chapter Two, a large proportion of volunteers, even more so in the sample group under consideration, came from professional and skilled occupations meaning that many had to forswear their civilian social privileges and status when enlisting. Men, who would have been considered officer material in peacetime, were thereby enlisted as soldiers.<sup>649</sup> George Brink was aware that several members of the South African business elite were under his command; his staff could “rattle off the names of a dozen or more officers and men in the Witwatersrand units alone who were millionaires or near millionaires ...”,<sup>650</sup> which may have contributed to his consistent reluctance to risk high casualties.<sup>651</sup>

The mixing of volunteers of divergent classes and occupations further strengthens the idea proposed by Tylden that a uniquely South African military typology had developed. Birkby romanticised the point in his book *Springbok Victory*; “... in a citizen army in which often the “boss” would be a private in a platoon commanded by one of his clerks and the colonel and the “quarter-bloke” might be regular golfing partners in peacetime.”<sup>652</sup> Dickinson also noticed the difference in the UDF soldiers when he confided in Birkby that “[t]he n.c.o.’s and even men [of lower ranks], act instinctively and with sound judgement when they have to rely on themselves. Your chaps have an unusually high level of education and intelligence.”<sup>653</sup>

Such observations support Tylden’s typology although he tracks the South African soldiers’ confidence back further, observing that they were “inclined to think themselves as good as their officers, no doubt a relic of the old commando days, when, as any commandant could have told, most of them were apt to think themselves better than those in command”.<sup>654</sup> The military’s rank stratification weighed heavier on volunteers who had received a rank lower than their civilian social status.

Sir De Villiers Graaff and Peter Brown, both from wealthy families, experienced the social stratification and conditioning that the hierarchical military structure created. As an NCO, Graaff, a British peer and wealthy Cape farmer, often found himself at odds with the military social structure. For instance, he would, as an NCO, pose as a chauffeur to dine in public with his friend, Major Lawrie Wilmot in Pretoria.<sup>655</sup> For Brown, his status as a private accentuated the class system of the military and that the war had “established a sort of other rank/officer, sort of class conflict” where he was located on the “lower - bottom end – of that class conflict”.<sup>656</sup> The volunteers’ mixed occupational

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<sup>649</sup> Calpin, *There Are No South Africans*, 367.

<sup>650</sup> Hartshorn, *Avenge Tobruk*, 37.

<sup>651</sup> Hartshorn, 52, 62.

<sup>652</sup> Birkby, *Springbok Victory*, 24.

<sup>653</sup> Birkby, 25.

<sup>654</sup> Tylden, *The Armed Forces of South Africa*, 30.

<sup>655</sup> Graaff, *Div Looks Back*, 64.

<sup>656</sup> Cardo, *Opening Men’s Eyes*, 40.



origins, and their displaced civilian social status, gave the UDF a unique 'democratic' nature and in some cases blurred the rigid military class distinction between the officers and men.

**Table 3.2: Ranks of sample group at volunteering by year and occupation class (n=153)<sup>657</sup>**

	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	Total
<b>Officers</b>	21	39	6	9	3	1	-	79
Professional	4	15	2	3	1	1	-	26
Intermediate	13	10	2	6	2	-	-	33
Skilled	1	9	1	-	-	-	-	11
Unknown	3	5	1	-	-	-	-	9
<b>NCO</b>	3	32	9	5	7	5	1	62
Professional		9	3	1	-	1	-	14
Intermediate	2	7	3	3	6	3	1	25
Skilled		14	3	1	1	1	-	20
Unknown	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	3
<b>Unknown Ranks</b>	5	4	-	-	2	1	-	12
Professional	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	3
Intermediate	2	1	-	-	1	1	-	5
Unknown	2	1	-	-	1	-	-	4
<b>Total</b>	29	75	15	14	12	7	1	153

The differences observed by Dickson was one of the consequences of the UDF being a volunteer force. When volunteering, the UDF bureaucracy decided on the volunteer's military utilisation. Table 3.2 shows the relationship between the pre-war occupational class (as discussed in Chapter Two), the year of attestation and the rank upon enlistment of the sample group. For approximately half, the sample group's previous social capital, which included past military experience, professional occupation, and social connections, transformed peace-time civilian status into similar military status. Occupational class translated into access to a commissioned rank, almost two-thirds of professional men received a commission, almost half of the intermediate professions enlisted as NCOs and skilled workers were twice as likely to enlist as NCOs. Thus, at the beginning of the war, the occupational class had a marginal advantage in securing a commission. For the rest, the military represented a new world which stripped away previous social class and privilege as experienced by Brown and Graaff. Table 3.2 also suggests that as the war progressed the chance of receiving a commission on attestation also declined. The differences in the war-experience of the members of the sample group suggest that instead of a singular uniform formative experience, the war influenced the men in different yet overlapping ways. Not only rank and occupation, but also the periodisation of service seems to separate these groupings. Thus, the war provided the soldier with a collective identity in which varied and contradictory political and class views could co-exist.

<sup>657</sup> Table developed by Author from DOD Archive, PA; UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information, File 35, Biographies 1951-1976; UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information, File 65 1 5 (part 2), General Election 1953 UP Candidates Information, *South African Who's Who 1948-1976*.

The advantage of previous social capital is most evident during the expansion phase of the UDF between 1939-1940. During this phase, Smuts realigned the command structure by appointing loyalists from the permanent force, ACF and society into crucial command and staff posts, allowing the transfer of social capital from the civilian field to the military field which is collaborated in Table 3.2.<sup>658</sup> Of the sample group, Colonel James Mitchell-Baker assumed the appointment of Quartermaster General (QMG).<sup>659</sup> Colonel Rupert Pilkington-Jordan, an ACF officer and prominent Cape Town Lawyer, became Deputy Adjutant General of the UDF and General Brigadier General Keith van der Spuy was recalled from London to become Director General Technical Services (DGTS).<sup>660</sup> Brigadier General Brink was appointed Deputy CGS. Ernst Malherbe was taken up from academia to head up the Directorate Military Intelligence (DMI). Smuts considered both political loyalty and competency when appointing these men, with many of those appointed remaining loyal to Smuts's ideals after the war.

The immediate demands of war also influenced the volunteers' access to rank. The UDF targeted volunteers who possessed the required specialisations and appointed and promoted them accordingly. The UDF, to fill its immediate requirements, favoured volunteers from the medical and engineering occupations. The rapid expansion of the medical services allowed many doctors and nurses to join up within their competency. Dr Bernard Friedman, a UP Member of Parliament (MP), served as a major in the SA Medical Corps (SAMC). Another UP MP, Dr Henry Gluckman, accepted the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and acted as the parliamentary liaison with the SAMC, before accepting the appointment of Minister of Health in 1945.<sup>661</sup> Dr Jan Steytler, son of politician Louw Steytler, also served as a Captain in the SAMC from 1940 until 1944.<sup>662</sup> Jock Isacowitz, a pharmacist, served a year as a gunner in East Africa, before being transferred to the SAMC in Kenya.<sup>663</sup> His former psychology Professor, Simon Biesheuvel (appointed as a Colonel), ensured Isacowitz's (who was an NCO despite his academic qualifications) eventual transfer at the SAAF Air Force Aptitude Centre in October 1941. Here Isacowitz met fellow left-wing activist, John O'Meara.<sup>664</sup>

In the same vein, the SA Engineer Corps preferred "making soldiers of engineers" than "making engineers of soldiers".<sup>665</sup> Similarly, other corps facilitated the entry of skilled volunteers, for example Len Lee-Warden's occupation as a printer made it possible for him to join the mobile printing unit which had been started by the Government Printer.<sup>666</sup> The needs of the SA Signal Corps allowed

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<sup>658</sup> Van der Waag, 'Smuts's Generals', 57.

<sup>659</sup> Martin and Orpen, *South Africa at War*, 64.

<sup>660</sup> Van der Spuy, *Chasing the Wind* (Cape Town: Books of Africa, 1966), 231.

<sup>661</sup> H Gluckman, *Abiding Values Speeches and Addresses by H Gluckman* (Johannesburg: Caxton, 1970), 9.

<sup>662</sup> DOD Archive, PA, Personnel Service File, Jan Steytler, V176486.

<sup>663</sup> Isacowitz, *Telling People What They Do Not Want to Hear*, 131.

<sup>664</sup> Isacowitz, 139–41.

<sup>665</sup> Martin and Orpen, *South Africa at War*, 69.

<sup>666</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2521 aa, David Everatt Papers, 'Memoirs Len Lee-Warden', 8.

Fred Carneson to use his experience in the post office to mislead the recruitment officer about his age.<sup>667</sup> Malherbe, when establishing the AES, also actively recruited servicemen and volunteers with the academic qualifications. For example, in 1942, the need for female welfare and Information Officers (WIO) led to the recruitment of Ms Helen Joseph and Ms Jacqueline de Villiers, mainly because of their university education. Joseph recalled:

I read a press announcement, calling for university and professional women to attend an intensive training course for welfare and information officers – the female counterpart of the male information officers in the South African Army Education Service. Any women selected at the end of the course would become full-time lieutenants in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force or the Women's Auxiliary Army Services. Others could remain in the forces as privates or simply go home again.<sup>668</sup>

Although the UDF acknowledged the volunteer's social capital, in many cases, the volunteers were reluctant to use their influence to avoid dangerous appointments or secure preferential treatment. It seems that they did the opposite, eager to engage the enemy; they eschewed the temporary status and safety that staff appointments and military rank could provide.<sup>669</sup> The reasons for this may have been varied. Some might have been motivated by adventure, others by masculinity or a sense of duty. While for others military service abroad might have been an opportunity to accumulate some form of capital that could be transferred to another field after the war.

In 1940, Harry Oppenheimer, initially appointed as Lieutenant in the Intelligence Corps to be stationed in South Africa, soon requested for a transfer to an Armoured Car Company, to see action in Egypt. Smuts, as a friend of Ernst Oppenheimer, however, was adamant that the front was no place for the heir to the Oppenheimer fortune. Only in July 1942, Harry Oppenheimer relented and returned to South Africa.<sup>670</sup> Graaff and his brother initially refused to attend an officers' course primarily because they suspected that Smuts, who was a friend and political colleague of their father Sir David Graaff, had taken a personal interest in their military careers.<sup>671</sup> Leo Lovell's initial attempt to join the SAAF was unsuccessful despite him being a Sergeant Major in the Benoni Rifle Association. He finally was able to secure an appointment, as a Staff Sergeant in the Indian Service Corps after an interview with Lieutenant Colonel George Morris, the Corps' Officer Commanding.<sup>672</sup> War-time military hierarchies had further complicated South African social structures resulting in the volunteers having to renegotiate their positions within the military hierarchy. These volunteers were wary of converting much of their social capital from civilian life into the military field. They believed

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<sup>667</sup> Carneson, *Red in the Rainbow*, 87.

<sup>668</sup> Joseph, *Side by Side*, 25.

<sup>669</sup> Graaff, *Div Looks Back*, 69; Hocking, *Oppenheimer and Son*, 179.

<sup>670</sup> Hocking, *Oppenheimer and Son*, 179, 209.

<sup>671</sup> Graaff, *Div Looks Back*, 68.

<sup>672</sup> Lovell, *For the Love of Justice*, 100–101.

that not only social capital in the military field was limited to the war, but it could also hinder their access to the front, and the adventure of participating in the war.

The volunteer's willingness to place themselves subservient to the needs of the UDF continued throughout the war, becoming more pronounced for the sample-group. Table 3.2 shows that as the war progressed the ratio of officers to NCOs declined, indicating that the UDF required fewer commissioned officers. Scholars and students volunteering later in the war, after either completing or abandoning their studies, did not expect preferential treatment despite their academic qualifications or social connections. In 1942, Brown, despite coming from an influential Natalian family, accepted the rank of private, reflecting later in life that it "would have bothered me if I had been promoted".<sup>673</sup> Colin Eglin also enlisted as a bombardier despite his university education as he recognised that by 1943, the Army had sufficient officers.<sup>674</sup> Within the sample group, almost half enlisted as NCOs despite possessing the required social capital to secure commissions. They probably saw their military service as a separate temporary distraction from their civilian occupations rather than a new career. Their willingness to be part of the ranks and to broaden their social perspectives outweighed their need for the military to recognise their civilian social capital.

However, as approximately half of the group did not enlist as NCOs, they were not exposed to the equalitarian experience of being part of the ranks. Furthermore, as the war continued, many NCOs were commissioned as officers. By demobilisation, the number of NCOs within the group had decreased by 22, as indicated in Table 3.3. Malherbe, to staff the AES, had recruited many NCOs with academic qualifications for information officers.<sup>675</sup> Of the 22 NCOs who received commissions during the war nine became information officers in the AES.

**Table 3.3: Ranks of ex-servicemen on attestation and demobilisation (n=153)<sup>676</sup>**

		Rank at demobilisation			Total
		NCO	Officer	Unknown	
Rank at attestation	Officer	-	78	1	79
	NCO	40	22	-	62
	Unknown	1	9	2	12
	Grand Total	41	109	3	153

The AES, which tracked the morale and opinions of the soldier, provides some insight into the officer's political opinions. In 1944, an information officer, Captain Bernard Notcutt, who after the war became a Professor in Psychology at the University of Natal, conducted an opinion survey on

<sup>673</sup> Cardo, *Opening Men's Eyes*, 40.

<sup>674</sup> Eglin, *Crossing the Borders of Power*, 16.

<sup>675</sup> Monama, 'Wartime Propaganda In the Union of South Africa 1939-1945', 224.

<sup>676</sup> Table developed by Author from DOD Archive, PA; UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information, File 35, Biographies 1951-1976; UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information, File 65 1 5 (part 2), General Election 1953 UP Candidates Information, *South African Who's Who 1948-1976*.

approximately 7 000 servicemen to determine their attitudes to South Africa's various problems. The purpose of the survey was to guide and direct the work of the AES and the information officer.<sup>677</sup> Table 3.4, extracted from the 1944 that AES Attitude Test, titled "What do you Think? – Wat dink Jy?", suggested that commissioned officers tended to be more liberal in attitude than NCOs regarding the issues of employment, education and political rights for Blacks.<sup>678</sup>

**Table 3.4: Race attitudes of UDF personnel (n=7 000±)<sup>679</sup>**

	In favour for more job opportunities for [Black Africans]	In favour for more Book Learning for [Black Africans]	In favour for more political rights for [Black Africans]
<b>Officer</b>	80%	81%	71%
<b>NCO</b>	50%	51%	41%

Despite the levelling effect of the volunteer force, with a high number of volunteers from the professional and specialist occupations being NCOs, a substantial difference in attitudes remained between the ranks, with officers being more tolerant of racial reform. Considering that over half the sample group were commissioned officers on demobilisation, the military's rank stratification caused a bifurcation within the sample group's military experiences. Where the commissioned officers' political disposition reflected a cautiously liberal approach, a broader diversity of political opinions and class confronted the NCO within the sample group.

At least half of the group successfully transformed their peacetime social capital from the civilian field to the military field, taking with them their previous political views. For the other segment, sharing space with more socially and politically diverse volunteers probably broadened their perspectives and even could have accentuated the otherness of their political views, thereby confronting and dislodging beliefs that had shaped the habitus before the war. The following section discusses the military campaigns in which these diverse elements came together in common cause.

### 3.3 WAR EXPERIENCE

The discussion of the war experience focuses on how the war both shaped the sample group's political disposition and contributed to their social, symbolic and cultural capital in the military field, which could have contributed to later involvement in post-war politics. The discussion tracks the group through their initial training, and their involvement in the two primary theatres of war, Africa and Italy, emphasising three aspects. Firstly how the volunteers had built bonds around a shared identity, secondly how the soldiers' interaction with the local populations had influenced their world-view, and lastly how the physical destruction of war, both as participants and witnesses had affected their political views.

<sup>677</sup> Malherbe, *Never a Dull Moment*, 251–53.

<sup>678</sup> Malherbe, 'Race Attitudes and Education', 12–14.

<sup>679</sup> Malherbe, 12–14.

### 3.3.1 Common experience of service

The recruitment and training of volunteers followed a general pattern. Regiments mobilised and accepted volunteers until their regimental allocations were full, after that a local recruitment office accepted recruits to full units that had either not filled their quota or did not directly recruit. Recruits were then allocated their mustering and concentrated at Kafferskraal near Klerksdorp. From there they were dispersed to various training camps and regimental concentration areas in places such as Premier Mine (Johannesburg), Potchefstroom, Cullinan, Zonderwater, Barberton, Ladysmith, before being deployed into the operational areas of East Africa, North Africa or Italy.<sup>680</sup> The rapid mobilisation meant that men who would never have met on an equal socio-economic footing during peacetime now had to share accommodation, ablutions, and experiences. During mobilisation and training, social standing and economic status associated with civilian life gradually eroded.

The shared experience of training, with shared facilities, ablutions and purpose, led to bonds developing between the soldiers that transcended class, culture and politics. For the insular English-speaking Natalian, the immersion into a pool of class and cultural diversity was incredibly moving. In training David Brokensha, who came from an affluent Natalian family, befriended several Afrikaners, led him to realise how unjustified the feeling of superiority the “English-speaking Natalians felt, regarding Afrikaners”.<sup>681</sup> Brokensha had developed a close relationship with an Afrikaans-speaker “Piet” Pieterse, who had originated from a poor background and had spent time at a juvenile reformatory.<sup>682</sup> Similarly, Brown, a wealthy Natalian, forged a strong friendship with a White miner from the lower working class.<sup>683</sup> After the war, Brown reminiscently noted how civilian socio-economic divisions often dissolved between men during active service:

I suppose the most important part of that [war] experience, from my point of view, was that one came into contact with a cross-section of white South African society, anyway, which probably wouldn't have happened otherwise. And made very substantial friendships with people from all layers of our society. So that was very good for somebody like me.<sup>684</sup>

However, Geoffrey Wilson, an anthropologist, expressed reservations about the value and permanency of the bonds forged in training;

A farmer, a farm foreman, a road foreman, a fireman and a couple of others whose professions and statuses I don't even know, are my chief contacts to date. But 'contacts' is all wrong: the

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<sup>680</sup> See Orpen, *East African and Abyssinian Campaigns*; APC, OHP, 'Interview with Dr Peter Brown conducted by Prof Norman Bromberger in Pietermaritzburg, 21 August 1995'.

<sup>681</sup> Brokensha, *Brokie's Way*

<sup>682</sup> Brokensha, *Brokie's Way*.

<sup>683</sup> Cardo, *Opening Men's Eyes*, 40.

<sup>684</sup> APC, OHP, 'Interview with Dr Peter Brown conducted by Prof Norman Bromberger in Pietermaritzburg, 21 August 1995'.



relationship can only be described in the army vernacular as 'mateship': it is a matter of borrowing or lending generously, of not pushing people nor pinching trifles...<sup>685</sup>

The shared experience of training melded volunteers from diverse backgrounds into combat units with a singular purpose. Living and training in close proximity soon resulted in common comradeship supplanting previous dispositions, status and occupations. For recruits from insular and cloistered backgrounds, the opportunity to transcend previous social divisions broadened their perspectives and opened new avenues for social interaction.

### 3.3.2 Combat theatres

As alluded to in Chapter One, the UDF deployed in the African and Italian theatres. In Africa, the South African involvement included Italian East Africa (Abyssinia), Madagascar and North Africa. Soldiers were awarded campaign medals for participation in each campaign. The Stars derived their names from each campaign, such as the Africa Star medal and the Italy Star medal. Along with other decorations and medals, these medals provided material evidence of the soldier's military career and participation in combat, giving the wearer credibility and a measure of cultural capital. The receipt of campaign medals is used as a proxy to identify soldiers with African campaign and Italian campaign experience.<sup>686</sup> Other campaign medals such as the Burma Star, Atlantic Star and the British Defence Medal also indicated service outside South Africa. The recipients of the Africa Star and Italian Star were distributed among the group as follows:

**Table 3.5: Service stars of sample group (n=153)<sup>687</sup>**

Rank	Africa Star	Africa and Italian Stars	Italy Star	Only Italy Star
<b>Officers</b>	63	23	34	11
<b>NCO</b>	26	11	20	9
<b>Rank Unknown</b>	3	1	1	-
<b>Total</b>	92	35	55	20

Table 3.5 presents the number of recipients of the Italian and African campaign medals within the sample group. Table 3.5 shows that 92 ex-servicemen served in the African campaigns, of which 35 then served in Italy. Another 20 of the sample served only in Italy, which brings the total of ex-servicemen in the sample with the Italian Star medal to 55. Thus, in total, 112 of the sample served in either Africa or Italy. Considering the ratio between Commissioned Officers and NCOs in each theatre of operation as presented in Table 3.5, the number of officers in the sample group is highest among those that volunteered early in the war and participated in the African campaigns. The decline

<sup>685</sup> See S Morrow, *The Fires Beneath: the life of Monica Wilson, South African anthropologist* (Cape Town: Penguin Books, 2016).

<sup>686</sup> The British Service Medal was issued to UDF personnel who were seconded to the British Army and many served in the Middle East

<sup>687</sup> Table developed by Author from DOD Archive, PA.

in ratio of officers to men in the sample group during the Italian campaign can be attributed both to the number of POWs captured at Tobruk and the transition between the 1 South African Division (1 SA Div) and 6 South African Armoured Division (6 SA Armd Div). When isolating the new volunteers that only fought in the Italian campaign, the ratio of officers to NCOs is at the lowest.

**Table 3.6: Average date of birth by campaign medal<sup>688</sup>**

Date of Birth	Africa Star	Italy Star	Africa and Italian Stars	Only Italy Star
<b>Officer</b>	1910	1912	1912	1912
<b>NCO</b>	1914	1920	1919	1921
<b>Unknown</b>	1917	1922	1922	-
<b>Average</b>	1911	1915	1914	1916

When considering the average age of the soldier in each campaign, Table 3.6 illustrates the age differences between the African and Italian campaign volunteers. Where the officer corps remained a stable age cohort throughout the war, the NCOs came from progressively younger cohorts as the war progressed, with the NCO being around 26 during the African campaigns (1940) and the NCO in the Italian campaign (1944) being between 23 and 24 years old. The reduction of the average age of the volunteer between the African and Italian campaign suggests that the supply of White men had declined as the war progressed. Furthermore, the difference in age and ratio between officers and NCOs between the campaigns within the sample group suggests that the younger ex-servicemen may have experienced the war differently to their older comrades and may constitute a separate group or class.

### 3.3.3 War in Africa

#### 3.3.3.1 East Africa

The East African campaign in 1940-1941 placed the White South African soldiers into a multinational, multiracial force, in an environment that was separated and alien to the political White supremacy views of South Africa. This applied even to the South African military component. The White combat soldiers relied on the support of a large contingent of Black and Indian soldiers for sustainment. Furthermore, the fighting in East Africa occurred in desolate areas spotted with small concentrations of inhabitants which limited the soldiers' engagement with the local population.<sup>689</sup> Even the concentration area at Gilgil was located far from the developed centres of Mombasa and Nairobi. Gilgil's location gave the UDF substantial control over the little interaction the soldiers had with both the local and British communities in Kenya.<sup>690</sup> Furthermore, within the combat areas, there was a distinction between the belligerents and the indigenous populations, with the loyalty of the indigenous

<sup>688</sup> Table developed by Author from DOD Archive, PA. Averages were calculated on dates of birth and ranks indicated on the Personnel Record Cards.

<sup>689</sup> Orpen, *East African and Abyssinian Campaigns*, 25–29. See Birkby, *The Saga of the Transvaal Scottish*, 76–79 for a detailed appreciation of Abyssinia.

<sup>690</sup> Birkby, *The Saga of the Transvaal Scottish*, 39–40.

populations to any side being mercurial and undependable.<sup>691</sup> The South African soldier separated from his country, in an alien environment, would find his assumptions of racial superiority questioned.

The collapse of the Italian forces in Abyssinia in mid-1941 left the White Italian population at the mercy of the indigenous people that they had previously conquered. The Italian forces' retreat in the face of the Allied advances, had left the Italian civilian population unprotected. When the Allied Forces were preparing to capture Direedawa on 29 March 1941, the Italian Assistant Governor-General of Direedawa appealed to the Allied forces for protection from the indigenous population.<sup>692</sup> He delivered a passionate appeal to the advancing Allied forces:

Sir, I come to you to beg you that entre with you soldiers before falling of the night into town as we are very seriously menaced by the natives. There are no soldiers of ours in the town of Dire Dawa [*sic.*] so that you will not find any more resistance everywhere. Sir, I assure you of this giving you my word of honour as official.<sup>693</sup>

Shortly afterwards Lieutenant Colonel Scrubs Hartshorn, the Officer Commanding of 1 Transvaal Scottish, had to deploy South African and Nigerian soldiers that night to quell the ensuing riots and prevent the massacre of the European population at Direedawa.<sup>694</sup> Similarly, when the Italians surrendered in Addis Ababa in April 1941, the Allied forces faced the challenge of protecting Italian civilians. As a general rule, the Allied forces left the surrendering Italian soldiers armed for reasons of self-defence.<sup>695</sup> The Italian defeat at the hands of a multiracial force served to undermine the myth of White supremacy.

The nature of the East African forces during the Abyssinian campaign placed substantial pressure on the South African racial myths that underwrote South Africa's segregationist society. The reality of fighting in multiracial and multinational forces confronted White South Africans, despite South African Black and Coloured soldiers being officially unarmed. During the war, White South African soldiers, both as part of the UDF and other British Forces, fought alongside armed African and Indian soldiers from British colonies.<sup>696</sup> Lovell, who was an officer in the South African Indian and Malay Corps, highlighted the irony of the South African position, noting that while the South African opposition was against arming Black and Coloured soldiers, those doing the actual fighting were less opposed;

...the men of our unit being coloured ... could not be issued with rifles ... This foolhardy policy was dictated by the sensitivities of the South African government to protests from the disloyal opposition, who objected to the arming of coloured men even outside the borders of South Africa!

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<sup>691</sup> Orpen, *East African and Abyssinian Campaigns*, 229.

<sup>692</sup> Orpen, 240.

<sup>693</sup> Birkby, *The Saga of the Transvaal Scottish*, 166.

<sup>694</sup> Orpen, *East African and Abyssinian Campaigns*, 240.

<sup>695</sup> Orpen, *East African and Abyssinian Campaigns*, 251. Birkby, *The Saga of the Transvaal Scottish*, 217.

<sup>696</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *South African Jews in World War Two*, 21.

We found the situation quite intolerable and it didn't take us long to scrounge captured Italian rifles and provide our men with at least some defence against attack.<sup>697</sup>

Similarly, Carneson, who served as a signalman during the Abyssinian campaign, reflected that "the South African soldiers were fighting together with Indians and African troops...They saw people of different races fighting together on the same side against a common enemy. This couldn't but have an effect on their general thinking".<sup>698</sup>

The shifting of racial attitudes during the campaign was also noted by Malherbe, as the Director of Military Intelligence. After the war Malherbe claimed that the soldiers' letters home revealed a positive change in attitude towards Black soldiers, particularly South African Black soldiers. He claimed that South African soldiers after having "experience with other Africans and particularly the Abyssinians" regarded their Black countryman as "far superior".<sup>699</sup> Furthermore, South African soldiers, as part of the spoils of victory, celebrated as soldiers do, across the colour bar. Their brief stay in Addis Ababa and other Abyssinian towns, such as Decamere, provided sufficient opportunity for inter-racial sexual liaison.<sup>700</sup> As Carneson wryly points out "a hell of a lot of White soldiers made contact with Black women for the first time in their lives ... The Immorality Act didn't apply as far as the soldiers were concerned, I can assure you".<sup>701</sup>

The South African Jewish soldier may have had more personal and spiritual interactions with the local population, as the Jewish community was well represented in Abyssinia by the Falashas or Abyssinian Jews. The shared religious culture allowed individual Jewish soldiers to engage with their co-religionists to celebrate religious events such as *Seder*, a feast as part of the Passover traditions. The close nature of these interactions resulted in the Falasha community elders attending the funeral of Sergeant Major A Levy who fell at Diredawa.<sup>702</sup> The close religious and emotional ties that the Jewish soldiers could develop with the local population in the combat theatres gave them a broader personal insight into the societal suffering and injustices that war accentuated.

Soldiers were deployed far from home, in an environment where racial segregation was difficult to enforce. They found themselves able to bridge the racial divide both in the course of their military task and socially. The blurring of these divisions may have modified ex-serviceman's habitus by confronting their previously held political and racial views, and may have made them more sympathetic towards political and racial reforms at home.

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<sup>697</sup> Lovell, *For the Love of Justice*, 109.

<sup>698</sup> SAHA, AL2460, 'Interview with F Carneson by J Fredrickse'.

<sup>699</sup> Malherbe, 'Race Attitudes and Education', 6.

<sup>700</sup> Bentz, 'At the Feshpots of Egypt', 2.

<sup>701</sup> SAHA, AL2460 'Interview with F Carneson by J Fredrickse', 19.

<sup>702</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *South African Jews in World War Two*, 22–23.

### 3.3.3.2 North Africa

The North African campaign occurring after the successes in Abyssinia, pitted the South Africans against the combined German and Italian forces in the North African desert. Much like in Abyssinia, in North Africa, the majority of the fighting occurred away from populated areas. However, the desert was an isolated, arid and flat place, starkly different from mountainous East Africa. Padre W. Yesorsky, a Jewish chaplain to the 3<sup>rd</sup> SA Brigade, described the noticeable absence of civilisation “We have so long now been here in emptiness...that the sand and dust seems to have entered into our very bones and have become part of us”.<sup>703</sup> It is such reminiscences that highlight how varied the South African war experience was between different theatres of war, which made for diverse war experiences.

The UDF used the vastness of the terrain in Egypt to heavily curtail the soldiers’ social interaction with the local population in the rear areas, with the South African camps at inconvenient distances from urban centres or as Brown expressed it, “plonked right in the middle of the desert”.<sup>704</sup> Forays into Cairo were limited, and the UDF strenuously discouraged any interaction across the colour bar.<sup>705</sup> Soldiers mostly occupied themselves in camp with sport and other activities. The boredom, inherent in military camps like Helwan, led some men to ponder over the future of South Africa. During periods of inactivity in Egypt in 1944 while waiting for deployment to Italy, Brown read the book *The Black Man’s Burden* by Leo Marquard, while shaping his views on the race problems of South Africa.<sup>706</sup> When trips became available to Cairo and Alexandria, socially connected soldiers were able to interact with the European Elite, while others enjoyed forays of military tourism at the historical sites and brothels.<sup>707</sup> Jewish soldiers were not only able to interact with the local Jewish communities to observe their religious practices, but Aaron Alexander, a leading member of the Egyptian Jewish community, provided them with entertainment. Alexander had a unique association with South Africa, as his brother Morris Alexander was a member of the South African Parliament.<sup>708</sup> The UDF’s continued attempts at perpetuating segregation among the South African soldiers in Egypt kept the contact between the South African soldiers and the indigenous population at a minimum, inadvertently shielding the soldiers from the civilian cost of war.

The separation of the soldiers from the broader society in the operational area meant that deep friendships developed between soldiers, which endured after the war. The already politicised soldier was able to find fellow-travellers in North Africa and also recruit sympathetic followers. The case of Ivan Shermbrucker is illuminating. As a signaller, he was seconded to the British 8 Army and served

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<sup>703</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, 30.

<sup>704</sup> Cardo, *Opening Men’s Eyes*, 39; Bentz, ‘At the Fleshpots of Egypt’, 3.

<sup>705</sup> Roos, ‘Education, Sex and Leisure’, 823. Bentz, ‘At the Fleshpots of Egypt’, 3-5.

<sup>706</sup> Cardo, *Opening Men’s Eyes*, 39–41.

<sup>707</sup> Cardo, *Opening Men’s Eyes*, 39; Graaff, *Div Looks Back*, 72.

<sup>708</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *South African Jews in World War Two*, 27, 50-51.

in North Africa from 1941 until 1942, whereafter he returned to South Africa. While in North Africa, Schermbrucker befriended fellow signalmen Wolfie Kodesh and Carneson. Carneson, already a member of the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA), had joined the Army in 1939 and, intending to politicise fellow soldiers, had been instrumental in forming the SL, which is discussed later in this chapter.<sup>709</sup> Kodesh, whose twin sister had exposed him to the CPSA, had joined the SL soon after enlisting.<sup>710</sup> In the army, Kodesh had become a vigorous advocate for the leftist SL which he had joined in 1942. He regularly engaged in long political discussions with fellow soldiers, such as Ivan Schermbrucker and Wilson.<sup>711</sup> Years after the war, Kodesh claimed to have recruited Wilson to the SL during their deployment together in North Africa. Kodesh and Schermbrucker soon became known for their communist sympathies. Brian Bunting, a fellow member of the CPSA, deployed nearby as an information officer, further strengthened the group.<sup>712</sup> On returning to South Africa in 1942, Schermbrucker joined the SL, and later Carneson formally recruited him into the CPSA.<sup>713</sup> The war in North Africa had provided the radical left soldiers with the social capital to consolidate and expand their political networks among the soldiers.

The radical left soldiers did not restrict their political work to politicising only White soldiers. Their interaction with fellow Black South African soldiers in the operational areas only confirmed the discrimination inherent in South Africa's segregation policy. Carneson's concern for the Zulu batmen allocated to his unit caused his colleagues to tease him relentlessly. They accused him of wanting to allow the Zulu soldiers to eat with the White soldiers.<sup>714</sup> Kodesh, who returned to Egypt in 1943 in preparation for the Italian campaign, was similarly perturbed by how the Indian, Coloured and African soldiers attached to his company were "given all the menial jobs, and they had spears to go on guard duty".<sup>715</sup> During this period, Kodesh as an active member of the SL exploited the disinterest of his fellow NCO, whom he remembered as Sergeant Bezuidenhout, to lecture the African soldiers on the policies of the SL. When an officer accused him of inciting mutiny, it was an information officer's evidence at his hearing which contributed to him being found not guilty.<sup>716</sup> Such interaction suggests that efforts at politicisation of the radicalised soldiers, such as Kodesh and Carneson, were not always successful or welcomed.

These accounts show that although radical left soldiers exploited the opportunities available in the Northern desert to conduct political work, their efforts were not always appreciated by the military or fellow soldiers and as such, they achieved mixed results in moving White soldiers' political opinion

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<sup>709</sup> SAHA, AL2640, 'Interview with F Carneson by J Fredrickse'.

<sup>710</sup> SAHA, AL2640, 'Interview with Wolfie Kodesh by J Fredrikse'.

<sup>711</sup> See Morrow, *The Fires Beneath*.

<sup>712</sup> Kirkaldy, 'Very Ordinary Communists', 428.

<sup>713</sup> Kirkaldy, 428.

<sup>714</sup> Carneson, *Red in the Rainbow*, 87.

<sup>715</sup> SAHA, AL2640, 'Interview with Wolfie Kodesh by J Fredrikse'.

<sup>716</sup> SAHA, AL2640, 'Interview with Wolfie Kodesh by J Fredrikse'.



leftwards. Although soldiering is predominantly a mixture of boredom and routine tasks, it is direct battle that defines and solidifies the martial and masculine aspect of a soldier's identity.

### 3.3.3.3 North African battles

In North Africa, two particular battles stand out as South African affairs, Sidi Rezegh in 1941 and the Surrender of Tobruk in 1942. The sample group's involvement in the two battles in North Africa endowed them with not only shared combat experience, but also social and symbolic status in the military field. The outcome of both Sidi Rezegh and Tobruk bestowed accolades on the surviving soldiers who had escaped either annihilation or capture, and for the captured soldiers, the ordeal of being a Prisoner of War (POW). A later section discusses the POW experience separately. At Sidi Rezegh, Captain Oppenheimer and Private Jack Hodgson, as a member of the 4 South African Armoured Car Regiment, provided a reconnaissance screen for the 7 British Armoured Division,<sup>717</sup> and had warned the 5 South African Brigade (5 SA Bde), of the advancing Germans, and had narrowly escaped the fighting.<sup>718</sup> Hodgson, who returned to South Africa with stomach ulcers in 1942, was immensely proud of being a 'Desert Rat'.<sup>719</sup> However, at Sidi Rezegh, those in the 5 SA Bde were not so fortunate.

Of the sample group, the experiences of Captain Leo Kowarsky, and Corporal Roger Brickhill of the 3 Transvaal Scottish, highlight the two outcomes that the South African soldiers faced. Kowarsky, although injured, escaped capture by the Germans. He was lauded for bravery and invested as an MBE for his efforts.<sup>720</sup> His citation read:

This officer served in the Third Transvaal Scottish and the Fifth South African Brigade in Abyssinia and Egypt. He was present with his regiment at Sidi Rezegh in command of a company, where he displayed great courage on the battlefield. He was badly wounded on that occasion and was subsequently evacuated to the Union.<sup>721</sup>

Corporal Brickhill, however, was less fortunate and spent the next three years in a POW camp and narrowly escaped death when the POW ship he travelled on to Italy was torpedoed.<sup>722</sup>

Similarly, the surrender of Tobruk to the Germans in 1942, became a psychological scar on the UDF's psyche. Birkby chronicles the fall of the outpost when he stated "[I]t fell with such speed and entirety that it shocked the Commonwealth. Most of all it shocked South Africa. For it was the greatest disaster that had ever befallen South African arms".<sup>723</sup> The soldiers at Tobruk faced the choice

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<sup>717</sup> Hocking, *Oppenheimer and Son*, 183; DOD Archive, PA, Personnel Service File, Percy John Hodgson 178459 and Oppenheimer V179832.

<sup>718</sup> Hocking, *Oppenheimer and Son*, 186.

<sup>719</sup> Bernstein, *Memory Against Forgetting*, 55.

<sup>720</sup> DOD Archives, PA, Personnel Service File, P1/12284, 'Leo Kowarsky, The Progressive Party Candidate for Ward 24'; UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information, File 35, Biographies 1951-1976, South Africa. South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *South African Jews in World War Two*, 30.

<sup>721</sup> UNISA-UP Archive, Central Head Office, Subject File 70,71, Union Federal Party-Roger Brickhill, 'Election Pamphlet Roger Brickhill'.

<sup>722</sup> Birkby, *The Saga of the Transvaal Scottish*, 506.

between the indignation of surrender or the equally embarrassing option of fleeing from the German advance. For the officers in the sample, the responsibility of maintaining order further complicated their choice. For example, Graaff, who was the adjutant of Die Middellandse Regiment, then invested with the 2 South African Division (2 SA Div) in Tobruk, when ordered to surrender, had his request to break out denied and was told: “to make sure [his] men were surrendered without causality, and then it was each man for himself”.<sup>724</sup> A more fortunate Captain Ralph Parrott of 1 Transvaal Scottish, was able to rally his company in an escape, thereby earning himself a commendation from Major General Dan Pienaar and an immediate Military Cross.<sup>725</sup> Carneson was also able to escape with his unit.<sup>726</sup> However, both men remained cagey about their escape experience, despite Parrott’s involvement in the writing of his regimental history, as a member of the Transvaal Scottish Regimental History Committee after the war.<sup>727</sup>

Despite losing 10 722 South African soldiers as POWs at Tobruk, the escape of handfuls of South African soldiers provided some consolation for the regiments that were bagged by the Germans. The South African experiences in North Africa were not edifying, and not only distracted from the South African successes in Abyssinia but also undermined the soldiers’ sense of confidence. Even among those that had escaped capture, some were reluctant to capitalise on the military accolades they had received.

Due to the nature of the battlefields in Africa, and restricted interaction of South African soldiers with the local populations, the soldiers in these campaigns rarely comprehended the social cost of the war and the full destructiveness of authoritarian regimes. In camp, the radical left’s attempt to politicise soldiers had mixed results despite the difficulties that the UDF faced in enforcing segregation. On the battlefield, the UDF commanders had mixed results. In Abyssinia, the South Africans advanced almost effortlessly against the Italians; however, in North Africa the South African commanders were less successful in delivering victories that would have validated their soldiers’ sense of martial identity. Thus, the African experience may have contributed to reinforcing a sense of shared White South Africanism and the possibility of a unified White South Africa.

### 3.3.4 War in Italy and Europe

When the 6 Armoured SA Division arrived in Italy in 1944, they faced a very different situation to that of Africa. The Italian theatre was totally unlike the flat, hot, dry, and sparsely populated deserts of Egypt where they had been training. Italy was mountainous, wet in spring, icy cold in winter and densely populated.<sup>728</sup> The countryside’s nature meant that neither the battlefield nor the soldiers

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<sup>724</sup> Graaff, *Div Looks Back*, 81–82.

<sup>725</sup> Birkby, *The Saga of the Transvaal Scottish*, 527–29.

<sup>726</sup> Carneson, *Red in the Rainbow*, 88.

<sup>727</sup> See Birkby, *The Saga of the Transvaal Scottish*.

<sup>728</sup> Orpen, *Victory in Italy*, 26; Bourhill, ‘Red Tabs’, 165.

could be isolated from the local population. Furthermore, Italy's surrender to the Allies on 3 September 1943 at Cassibile, meant that by 1944 the Italians were co-belligerents fighting alongside Allied forces, and the Italian population now saw the South Africans as liberators from the occupying German forces, and not as adversarial conquerors.<sup>729</sup>

The following discussion elaborates on how these characteristics of the Italian campaign helped shape the political views of the servicemen. The discussion emphasises the effect of the destruction of the war on Italian infrastructure and society, the intimacy that developed between the South African soldiers and Italian society and the strengthening of bonds between soldiers. The discussion also partly covers the period of demobilisation in Italy between 1943 and 1946, and the soldiers' return to South Africa.

The close proximity of the Italian population to the fighting in Italy meant that soldiers interacted frequently both officially and unofficially with the local population. On the front, the UDF requisitioned Italian homesteads, hostels and schools for accommodation and headquarters.<sup>730</sup> In the rear, the UDF had less success at keeping the South African soldiers segregated from the population than in Africa, despite the establishment of service clubs in local hostels.<sup>731</sup> Although service clubs provided for the soldiers' social needs, the soldiers sought intimacy from Italian women. Although prostitution flourished, some South African soldiers developed real relationships with Italian women and returned to South Africa with Italian wives.<sup>732</sup> When on leave, soldiers were also given the opportunity, in a lottery system, to take rest leave to visit Rome and other sites in the rear. Such visits exposed the soldiers to a microcosm of Italian culture, and the impact of the war on Italian society and infrastructure.<sup>733</sup> Fighting in Italy affected the South African soldiers in a more intimate and personal manner than the African theatre as this section shows.<sup>734</sup>

The density of the population and villages meant that soldiers witnessed the destruction of villages and farmsteads from previous fighting when moving between the front and the rear.<sup>735</sup> These factors had a varied impact on these men. For soldiers with communist sympathies, such as Kodesh while his unit moved through Italy, it seemed that the poor suffered the brunt of the destruction of the war. He recounts that it

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<sup>729</sup> A Delpont, 'Changing Attitudes of South Africans towards Italy and Its People during the Second World War, 1939-1945', *Historia*, 58, no. 1 (2013), 179–91.

<sup>730</sup> Bourhill, 'Red Tabs', 68.

<sup>731</sup> Roos, 'Education, Sex and Leisure', 824.

<sup>732</sup> Bourhill, 'Red Tabs', 146–49.

<sup>733</sup> Eglin, *Crossing the Borders of Power*, 22; Hain, *Ad and Wal*, 17; Bourhill, 'Red Tabs', 115.

<sup>734</sup> Bourhill, 'Red Tabs', 173.

<sup>735</sup> Eglin, *Crossing the Borders of Power*, 20; Hain, *Ad and Wal*, 12.

had a terrific impact on me, because I equated these poor people with the Coloured people that I knew lived in hovels, you know, and the Africans who lived in tin shanties that I knew...<sup>736</sup>

Such observations in Italy reminded Kodesh of his own experiences of injustice in Cape Town before the war and further strengthened the political awakening he had undergone in North Africa. Kodesh was not the only one to compare the Italian class structure with the South African race structure, as James Chutter made a similar connection, albeit under different circumstances. As a POW in Italy, Chutter made a similar comparison between the Italian peasant and Black South Africans. He stated "The poverty of the [Italian] peasants was noticeable. It is doubtful indeed whether their chattel value was higher than that of the Zulu in his kraal..."<sup>737</sup>

However, unlike Kodesh, or even maybe Chutter, Joe Slovo was not convinced that such observations awoke South African soldiers to the injustices in the Union. Slovo felt that the pre-war racial attitudes of the South African soldier were already too deeply embedded for any war experience to significantly or permanently dislodge or alter previously held views. As Slovo argued after the war:

It was an army riddled with racist attitudes; in Italy, most members of my unit would quite happily have forgotten Hitler and turned their weapons against an American black walking arm in arm with an Italian blonde. And experience taught me that this type of gut feeling was not just an Afrikaner syndrome; if anything, the purse lipped racism of the English gentlemen from Natal was more irreversible. The Jew was slightly less rabid, but even he saw little connection between the Jewish ghettos in Europe and the black ones in South Africa.<sup>738</sup>

Jonathan Fennell, who reviewed censor reports from the war, supports Slovo's prognosis that racial attitudes among the soldiers were too embedded for them to consider social equality between races.<sup>739</sup> Although the destruction of war may not have awakened the soldier to the inequalities at home, it did accentuate the menace of authoritarian regimes. While fighting, men were preoccupied with survival, isolated from the press and sequestered from the full magnitude of the war. Once the fighting had ended, soldiers were able to focus on their surroundings, and many soldiers were able to use their military pass to visit many of Europe's war-ravished cities. Eglin recounted that the end of the war brought to the fore a greater realisation of the atrocities of Nazism and Fascism. As Eglin recalled:

we began to learn from uncensored sources of the death and destruction and human misery the war had brought to Europe. Added to this were first-hand accounts of the beastiality [*sic.*] of the Gestapo, of the horrors of the Nazi concentration camps, and of the callous killing of millions of men, women and children in Hitler's gas chambers.<sup>740</sup>

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<sup>736</sup> SAHA, AL2640, 'Interview with Wolfie Kodesh by J Fredrikse'.

<sup>737</sup> Chutter, *Captivity Captive*, 87.

<sup>738</sup> Slovo, *Slovo: The Unfinished Autobiography*, 29.

<sup>739</sup> Fennell, *Fighting the People's War*, 1186.

<sup>740</sup> Eglin, *Crossing the Borders of Power*, 28.

Brown, exploiting his pass, was able to travel as far as Munich and Berlin after the cessation of hostilities. During his travels, he observed “the terrible devastation in these places...the terrible poverty of those people who had nothing to eat...”<sup>741</sup> The witnessing of the depravities of authoritarian governments and the destruction of European society implanted a dislike for fascism in the soldiers and provided retrospective justification for their participation and sacrifice in the war. This had left an indelible mark on the Italian campaign veterans’ habitus.

The familiarity that had developed between the South African soldiers and Italian population drew the radical left soldier into the Italian communist fraternity. The Italian resistance movements that surfaced to fight alongside the Allies were anti-fascist and left-wing in nature.<sup>742</sup> Communist soldiers such as Bunting, Carneson and Shermbrucker worked with the Italian partisans and Communist Party in Italy and were acquainted enough to organise joint May Day parades with the local Italian populace in 1945.<sup>743</sup> When Germany surrendered in May 1945, Slovo’s unit was just outside Turin. Slovo articulated his involvement in the celebrations in utopian socialist terms as he describes that he had “linked arms with the local peasants and workers. We moved from street to pub and back again, exchanging flowers, laughing, weeping, singing and talking about the beautiful future”.<sup>744</sup> For Rusty Bernstein, the experience of interacting with the communist partisans was similarly heady:

Everything about Italian civil society was in a fascinating ferment of change. Partisans and freedom fighters all around us were unmasking Fascism and struggling to create a new democracy. In their centre were the communists and left radicals with whom I shared an ideology. I was striking up friendships with some of them outside the Army...<sup>745</sup>

The communist soldiers attributed the liberation of Italian towns to the communist partisans. For these soldiers, the communist partisan symbolised the forefront of the revolution.<sup>746</sup> However, less radicalised soldiers were not so naive. While awaiting demobilisation Eglin, having befriended Mariella, a university student, became well-versed in “the political battle lines being drawn in Turin, as in the rest of the industrial heartland of Italy, between the Communists led by Pietro Nenni, and the conservative Christian Democrats led by Palmiro Togliatti”.<sup>747</sup> Thus, the serviceman’s experience of the Italian campaign indicated a symbiotic relationship between their previous dispensations and lived experience where habitus framed experience as much it was formed by experience.

As in both the African campaigns, the shared military experience became a foundation on which enduring bonds of friendship formed and gave the ex-serviceman social capital, such as networks.

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<sup>741</sup> APC, OHP, ‘Interview with Dr Peter Brown conducted by Prof Norman Bromberger in Pietermaritzburg, 21 August 1995’.

<sup>742</sup> Delport, ‘Changing Attitudes of South Africans towards Italy and Its People during the Second World War, 1939-1945’, 181.

<sup>743</sup> Kirkaldy, ‘Very Ordinary Communists’, 429; Carneson, *Red in the Rainbow*, 91.

<sup>744</sup> Slovo, *Slovo: The Unfinished Autobiography*, 30.

<sup>745</sup> Bernstein, *Memory Against Forgetting*, 71.

<sup>746</sup> Lodge, ‘Secret Party’, 441.

<sup>747</sup> Eglin, *Crossing the Borders of Power*, 32.

The Italian campaign created not only new bonds but also strengthened previous acquaintances that had predated the war or had developed during the African campaigns. For instance, in 1943 Carneson met Bunting on a troopship, the *Sibyak*, en route to Italy and thereby became firm friends. On the trip, they had endless discussions about politics.<sup>748</sup> As indicated previously, Shermbrecker had linked up Carneson and Bunting, old comrades from North Africa. Eglin and Major Lionel Murray, who had already received a Military Cross for bravery in the battle of Monte Sole in April 1945, met in Italy, with both men later entering post-war politics. Bernstein met up with his old schoolmaster, Cecil Williams, in Italy through their shared involvement in the SL.<sup>749</sup> After demobilisation, Bernstein and Monty Berman, another member of the SL, celebrated Christmas in 1945 in a transit camp at Foggia “drinking bad wine...”.<sup>750</sup> After the war, just the shared Italian experience was sufficient to ignite a familiarity among the ex-servicemen, as years later their shared participation in the Battle of Monte Stanco would cement the friendship between Brown and Walter Hain of the Liberal Party (LPSA).<sup>751</sup>

The Italian campaign occurred in the last stages of the war, and unlike the African campaigns, was fought among the population. Soldiers bore witness to a society that had born the full destruction of war. Soldiers schooled in Marxist class dialectic quickly compared the Italian class structures to the South African race structure. Their engagements with Communist partisans further strengthened their doctrinal adherence. For the less politicised soldier, witnessing the deprivation war had on the Italian society, and the destruction of the countryside made them disdainful of authoritarianism as a political system. The bonds of friendships created from the shared military experience also provided the servicemen with enduring social capital.

### 3.3.5 Prisoners of war

The military disasters at Sidi Rezegh and Tobruk resulted in approximately 3 000 and 10 722 soldiers taken POW respectively.<sup>752</sup> In total, over 14 583 South African soldiers were POWs during the war.<sup>753</sup> Table 3.7 indicates the POWs within the sample group of 153 ex-servicemen. Of the 153 ex-servicemen that became involved in national post-war politics, 21 or about 12 per cent had been captured during the war. The majority, mostly commissioned officers from the 2 SA Div, had been captured together at the fall of Tobruk, and two were captured at Sidi Rezegh. The remainder became POWs in East Africa, Crete and Greece.

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<sup>748</sup> Carneson, *Red in the Rainbow*, 91.

<sup>749</sup> Bernstein, *Memory Against Forgetting*, 68.

<sup>750</sup> Bernstein, 74.

<sup>751</sup> Hain, *Ad and Wal*, 72.

<sup>752</sup> Horn, ‘Researching South African Prisoners-of-War Experience’, 83.

<sup>753</sup> Van der Waag, *A Military History of Modern South Africa*, 212.



**Table 3.7: POWs in the sample group (n=153)<sup>754</sup>**

Rank	Sidi Rezegh	Tobruk	Other	Total
Officer	1	11	3	14
NCO	1	4	1	6
Total	2	15	4	21

South African writers have argued that the POW experience had a cathartic effect on the POWs, drawing them towards more liberal views about class and race. Karen Horn argued that POWs “experienced some shift in their orthodox ideas of race and class as they were exposed first-hand to the attitudes of peasants and forced labourers while in work camps”.<sup>755</sup> For Malherbe, POWs had “lots of time to think”, about “how far South Africa itself fell short of those ideals [democracy and it’s principles] for which they were supposed to be fighting, particularly when it came to applying them to the under-privileged races...”.<sup>756</sup> These new world views may have made the POWs more sensitive to and disapproving of the extremist nationalist view that had gained traction in South Africa during and after the war. Despite the POWs returning to South Africa with a clearer political vision after prolonged periods of self-reflection, Horn argues that the POW experience did not result in a heightened post-war political activism as “the former POWs were more concerned with their own welfare interests after having been held captive and at the mercy of others for so long”.<sup>757</sup> Thus the ex-servicemen listed above are exceptions to Horn’s findings. The discussion below explores these POWs’ activities during captivity.

Being captured was traumatic and embarrassing for the soldiers and disrupted their confidence and sense of being. Chutter wrote afterwards “[i]t is seldom appreciated that being captured by the enemy, in addition to physical discomfort, involves a severe shock to the whole personality”.<sup>758</sup> For the South African soldier, surrender was incredibly painful as, “many of them [were] men of standing and responsibility who had sacrificed much to serve”.<sup>759</sup> Chutter, in his religious duties, provided comfort to all belligerents and all ranks, thereby gaining insight into the difficulties experienced by officers and men alike.<sup>760</sup> For Chutter, the shared trauma of captivity soon dissolved any residual class differences that had survived military training. Chutter “found that the social strata, so carefully laid down by financial resources, quickly disappeared”.<sup>761</sup> Chutter experienced that even race

<sup>754</sup> Table developed by Author from DOD Archive, PA ; UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information, File 35, Biographies 1951-1976; UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information, File 65 1 5 (part 2), General Election 1953 UP Candidates Information, *South African Who’s Who 1948-1976*.

<sup>755</sup> K. Horn, ‘South African Prisoner -of-War Experience during and after World War II: 1939–c.1950’ (PhD Dissertation, Stellenbosch University, 2012), 231.

<sup>756</sup> Malherbe, ‘Race Attitudes and Education’, 2.

<sup>757</sup> Horn, ‘South African Prisoner -of-War Experience during and after World War II: 1939–c.1950’, 232.

<sup>758</sup> Chutter, *Captivity Captive*, 40.

<sup>759</sup> Chutter, 41.

<sup>760</sup> M Leigh, *Captives Courageous* (Rivonia: Ashanti Publishers, 1992), 18–19, 146; Chutter, *Captivity Captive*, 44–46.

<sup>761</sup> Chutter, *Captivity Captive*, 163.

differences were weakened during incarceration, for at *Stalag VIIA* “fifty British officers, a hundred American airmen, a hundred South African Bantu men and fifty Palestinian Labourers” were quartered in a barracks together in racial harmony.<sup>762</sup> Being a POW levelled any residual class distinction, eroded social capital and allowed new leaders to emerge.

Soon after capture, the POWs settled into the camp routine and organised themselves in various committees, revealing the leadership aptitude of the captured men. The committees organised activities such as lectures, classes, debates, and other forms of entertainment. At the Tarhuna camp near Tripoli, Lionel Cooper, a Johannesburg lawyer, set up an informal adult education effort, persuading his fellow inmates to present.<sup>763</sup> At the same camp, Private Dave Katzeff, interned in mid-1942, organised the Jewish service of *Rosh Hashana* and *Kol Nidrei* for fellow Jewish POWs. As a POW in Italy and Germany, he edited and produced the camp newsletter, named *The Observer*. He claimed that he started the project because the already established wallpapers snubbed his literary efforts and because “he had very little else to do”.<sup>764</sup> His role as editor of the *Observer* placed him centrally to a hive of activity of writers, artists and support staff.<sup>765</sup> He was able to retrieve all copies of the newspaper, and on return to South Africa, he issued the paper in a single volume called *The Observer Stalag IV B*, in aid of the SL.<sup>766</sup>

On arrival in Italy, the POWs continued to present lectures to one another.<sup>767</sup> In Campo 21, at Chieti, the POWs formalised the lectures into formal classes in law, economics and farming.<sup>768</sup> The Law School that developed at Chieti was attended by five officers that would after the war become South African judges, namely Neville Holmes, Anton Hawthorne, Taffy Harcourt, Blen Franklin and Denis Fannin.<sup>769</sup> Chutter was involved with the Theological Society, which practised the Anglican sacrament and conducted theological studies.<sup>770</sup> When Italy surrendered to the Allied forces in 1943, the POWs at Chieti were dispersed to various camps in Germany, where they continued conducting lectures and learning. Chutter continued lecturing on his transfer to Camp Oflag 79 in Braunschweig. He estimates that before the war ended, 400 officers at the camp had sat for public examination, and no fewer than eight theology students had successfully undertaken the General Ordination

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<sup>762</sup> Leigh, *Captives Courageous*, 114; Chutter, *Captivity Captive*, 107.

<sup>763</sup> Brokensha, *Brokie's Way*.

<sup>764</sup> Leigh, *Captives Courageous*, 73.

<sup>765</sup> For more detail of the operating of Katzeff's paper see: Leigh, 73–81.

<sup>766</sup> South African Jewish Board of Deputies, *South African Jews in World War Two*, 115–16.

<sup>767</sup> See A Candy, ‘The memoirs of an artilleryman... Prisoner of War 1942-5 Part One: ‘In the Bag’’, *Military History Journal*, 14, no. 3 (June 2008). Available: <http://samilitaryhistory.org/vol143ac.html> [Accessed: 3 September 2019].

<sup>768</sup> Leigh, *Captives Courageous*, 92–93; Chutter, *Captivity Captive*, 67; Graaff, *Div Looks Back*, 86–87.

<sup>769</sup> Leigh, *Captives Courageous*, 93; Graaff, *Div Looks Back*, 86.

<sup>770</sup> Chutter, *Captivity Captive*, 66–67.

Examination of the Church of England.<sup>771</sup> The ordeal of capture had disrupted the military hierarchal structure, revealing suppressed leadership potential among the soldiers.

For men that had previous political experience, incarceration allowed them time to reflect on the political future of South Africa. The most prominent South African politician to be captured was Graaff. Before the war, in April 1939, Smuts had made it clear to Graaff that he expected him to follow on from his father in politics and “that he [Smuts] couldn’t have us young men running around too long when there were jobs to be done in politics”.<sup>772</sup> In this vein, the UP had nominated Graaff for election in 1943 despite him being on active duty. Naturally, he found himself involved in discussing post-war scenarios with fellow POWs, including Fannin, in the Modena officers’ camp.<sup>773</sup> Graaff further consolidated his stature among the other POWs by his contribution to the education of fellow POWs. A strong clique of POWs emerged with Graaff at its centre, which included of the sample group, Montgomery (Monty) Crook, Harold van Hoogstraten and Walter (Wally) Kingwell.<sup>774</sup> After the war, Gideon Jacobs, an officer with the Royal Marines and future UP MP, observed that Graaff had “evoked immense loyalty from all that were with him”.<sup>775</sup> In recognition of Graaff’s actions as a POW he received an MBE after the war.<sup>776</sup> Graaff’s enduring stature among the POWs led fellow POW, Captain Eric Hyland, to describe Graaff as “a great asset to South Africa in years to come – politically and otherwise”.<sup>777</sup> For Graaff, his POW experience had endowed him with crucial social capital in the form of a trusted inner circle of loyal courtiers and the reinforced belief in his leadership skills.

Although the trauma of capture and incarceration had stripped away class distinctions between servicemen, and forced introspection about the future of South Africa, the POW experience had not dramatically dislodged the political disposition of the servicemen. However, the POWs that were able to organise their environment and immerse themselves in efforts to help fellow POWs seem to have not only escaped the scars of their detention, but also have developed social capital in the form of new social networks, and standing.<sup>778</sup> The reminiscences of POWs, such as Graaff and Chutter, emphasise the durability of the bonds and loyalties formed by the trauma of capture and shared captivity.

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<sup>771</sup> Leigh, *Captives Courageous*, 95–96; Chutter, *Captivity Captive*, 131–32.

<sup>772</sup> Graaff, *Div Looks Back*, 60.

<sup>773</sup> Horn, ‘South African Prisoner -of-War Experience during and after World War II: 1939–c.1950’, 236–37; Graaff, *Div Looks Back*, 88.

<sup>774</sup> Leigh, *Captives Courageous*, 94; Graaff, *Div Looks Back*, 87.

<sup>775</sup> Leigh, *Captives Courageous*, 94–95.

<sup>776</sup> Leigh, 95.

<sup>777</sup> Leigh, 94.

<sup>778</sup> Leigh, 95.

### 3.4 POLITICISATION DURING THE WAR

The above sections dealt with how the soldiers' war experience had contributed to both shifts in their political dispensation and had contributed to their social and cultural capital by strengthening social networks, and the accumulation of cultural capital in the form of rank, decorations or status. The discussion now moves to discuss attempts to politicise the servicemen, firstly by covering the soldiers' efforts to self-organise as a pressure group in the form of the SL, and secondly, in the UDF's efforts to direct the political education in the form of the AES.

#### 3.4.1 Ensuring a fair deal and the Springbok Legion

Enduring memories from the previous war's demobilisation inspired the rise of soldiers' organisations to secure post-war justice for soldiers. Wary of the reluctance of the British Empire Services League (BESL) formed in 1921 and the Memorable Order of the Tin Hats (MOTHS) formed in 1927 to assist them, led to the soldiers striking out on their own.<sup>779</sup> The subsequent organisation, the Springbok Legion, rejected the a-political stance of previous veteran organisations and pursued a political agenda from the onset. The political nature of the SL provided politicised soldiers with a platform from which to conduct their political work, thus associating the SL with communism.

The formation of the Legion was partly due to the inability of both the MOTHS and the BESL to gain resonance with the soldiers, as neither were strong proponents of political pressure and self-reliance.<sup>780</sup> A flurry of activities initiated by the soldiers soon filled the vacuum that these organisations' inertia had created. By 1941, soldiers had organised themselves into debating societies and 'Soldiers parliaments', both in South Africa and up North. In South Africa, the core group were soldiers of the 9 Reconnaissance Battalion of the South African Tank Corps, and up North the soldiers of the 1 SA Bde. In the SA Tank Corps at Kafferskraal, Vic Clapham, son of Vic Clapham Snr who having served in the previous world war had initiated the Comrades Marathon,<sup>781</sup> and Hodgson, a Communist Unionist,<sup>782</sup> played a prominent role in establishing a soldier's movement. At about the same time, in the 1 SA Bde (Duke of Edinburgh's Own Rifles), John Morley<sup>783</sup> and Carneson,<sup>784</sup> both members of the CPSA, took the initiative in establishing a similar movement.<sup>785</sup> Morley became known as the 'Red Sergeant' when he flew a red flag on his vehicle during the East African campaign.<sup>786</sup> Many of the founding members of these movements were either

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<sup>779</sup> Roos, *Ordinary Springboks*, 70.

<sup>780</sup> Roos, 70.

<sup>781</sup> Simons and Simons, *Class and Colour in South Africa 1850-1950*, 540; DOD Archive, PA, Personnel Service File, Victor Clapham V14826.

<sup>782</sup> Bernstein, *Memory Against Forgetting*, 55.

<sup>783</sup> SAHA, AL2640, 'Interview with F Carneson by J Fredrickse'.

<sup>784</sup> DOD Archives, PA, Personnel Service File, John Morely, 107672.

<sup>785</sup> Wits Historical Papers A2521 aa, David Everatt Papers 'Interview with Fred Carneson by David Everatt'.

<sup>786</sup> Simons and Simons, *Class and Colour in South Africa 1850-1950*, 531. Wits Historical Papers A2521 aa, David Everatt Papers 'Interview with Fred Carneson by David Everatt'.

members of the CPSA before the war or harboured radical-leftist or liberal sympathies.<sup>787</sup> Carneson provides an overview of how the different initiatives developed:

I was active in the sort of political work that was developing among the soldiers in the Army, Springbok Legion. When we were in the desert, myself and a chap by the name of John Morley, we formed a union of soldiers ... there was a strong feeling amongst South African soldiers that we were certainly not British, whatever else we were - we were South Africans first and foremost ... [W]e wanted our own ex-servicemen's organisation to cope with the problems we knew would face us when we got back home, so John and I started what we called a Union of Soldiers ... Then we heard about the Springbok Legion that had started almost simultaneously down in South Africa from ex-servicemen who for one reason or another found themselves back in the ... Union of South Africa, Jack Hodgson, for instance, who was active there, so we linked up with them, and from then onwards we were busy recruiting for the Springbok Legion, and it became a vehicle in the South African Army for a lot of progressive thinking, on the race issue as well, amongst white South African soldiers...<sup>788</sup>

As evident in Carneson's explanation, much of the initial organising was undertaken by soldiers with previous political exposure, who were frustrated by the lethargy of the previously established veteran organisations.

It did not take long for the various soldiers' movements to consolidate into the SL. Although the initial stimulus for the Legion was to prevent these soldiers from enduring the same neglect as the soldiers of the First World War during their demobilisation, the Legion quickly appropriated other issues that concerned the soldiers. Such issues included the arming of Black soldiers and the end to the differentiation between soldiers based on their race.<sup>789</sup> Carneson, in a wandering reminiscence, captures the thought behind the SL:

But we were very interested in the war. The fight against Fascism, and also there was a feeling, because of the nature of the struggles, it was an anti-fascist, anti-nazi struggle, linked up with an anti-nazi struggle, back home struggle for white democracy, if you like, back home that was under threat. But there was a feeling that the struggle was not going to end when the war was over. We have got to get back and we will have to fight a political struggle as well. Not necessarily, we all recognised that the ex-serviceman's organisation could not go on forever, but certainly there would be a period, when ex-servicemen, as a political grouping, would be able to make a bit of an impact in South Africa. It was a whole collection of ideas that were floating around of this nature that led to the Springbok Legion. It was not just going to be an ordinary ex-serviceman's organisation – a “do-goodie” organisation.<sup>790</sup>

On the amalgamation of the various initiatives, Isacowitz and Williams emerged as the SL's most prominent leaders.<sup>791</sup> The SL appealed to the fighting soldier who was recruited by SL members who were active both in deployed units and at home.

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<sup>787</sup> Lambert, 'Their Finest Hour?', 78.

<sup>788</sup> SAHA, AL2640, 'Interview with F Carneson by J Fredrickse'.

<sup>789</sup> Lambert, 'Their Finest Hour?', 78. See also Lazerson, *Against the Tide*; N Roos, 'The Second World War, the Army Education Scheme and the 'Discipline' of the White Poor in South Africa', *History of Education*, 32, no. 6 (2003), 645–59.

<sup>790</sup> Wits Historical Papers A2521 aa, David Everatt Papers 'Interview with Fred Carneson by David Everatt'.

<sup>791</sup> SAHA, AL2640, 'Interview with F Carneson by J Fredrickse'; SAHA, AL2640, 'Interview with Wolfie Kodesh by J Fredrikse'.

As previously mentioned, by the end of the war, the SL boasted a membership of over 50 000, which included men awaiting demobilisation and men already discharged from service earlier in the war.<sup>792</sup> The SL soon become a haven for both soldiers who were active in politics before the war and those for whom the war was a political awakening experience. Working in the SL drew these men and women into a close, self-reinforcing network of influence, strengthened by similar political views. Many of the servicemen who had 'cut their teeth' in the Legion would continue with politics after the war as the following chapter will show. Of the sample group of 153 ex-servicemen that were active in post-war politics, 29 of the 153 were office-bearers of the SL as can be seen in Table 3.8. Table 3.8 illustrates that as a Soldiers' Union, the ranks of the office-bearers were confined mainly to junior officers and other ranks.

**Table 3.8: Rank of Springbok legionnaires on demobilisation (n=153)<sup>793</sup>**

Officers	Number	NCO	Number
<b>Capt</b>	4	<b>WO.</b>	1
<b>Lt</b>	6	<b>Sgt</b>	3
		<b>Cpl</b>	1
		<b>LCpl</b>	1
		<b>Pte</b>	9
		<b>Unknown NCO</b>	4
<b>Total</b>	10		19

The involvement of CPSA members in the formative years of the SL led to the SL's association with communism despite the SL's appeal to all soldiers. As seen from the previous sections, the CPSA members used the Legion as a vehicle to propagate their ideology and find like-minded soldiers. For instance, Rowley Arenstein saw the war and SL as a vehicle to spread their leftist views and grow the CPSA's membership. According to Neil Roos, Arenstein claimed that by 1942 the CPSA had hoped that the war would enable the party to win White soldiers over to their leftist ideology of a non-racial working class.<sup>794</sup> As Carneson noted, "I was against the war, but I also knew that where there were soldiers you had communists - I mean this is - this is what I was thinking".<sup>795</sup>

<sup>792</sup> Lambert, 'Their Finest Hour?', 78; Lazerson, *Against the Tide*, 58.

<sup>793</sup> Table developed by the Author from Springbok Legion Minutes and *Fighting Talk* magazines. See Wits Historical Papers, A617, Springbok Legion; University of KwaZulu Natal, Digital Innovation South Africa, [www.disa.ukzn.ac.za](http://www.disa.ukzn.ac.za).

<sup>794</sup> Roos, 'The Second World War, the Army Education Scheme and the 'Discipline' of the White Poor in South Africa', 654.

<sup>795</sup> SAHA, AL2640, 'Interview with F Carneson by J Fredrickse'.



Similarly, for men like Bernstein, who had been a socialist as a student at the University of Witwatersrand (Wits) before the war, the SL allowed him to carry on with “a little bit of political activity in the army” by trying to attract members.<sup>796</sup>

Furthermore, Germany’s invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941 led to a wave of CPSA members joining the UDF, with the objectives of the SL attracting additional communist membership.<sup>797</sup> Some of these men, such as Slovo, Bernstein and Bunting, had complied with the CPSA’s previous opposition to the war, but when the Soviet Union as the principal advocate for communist ideology came under threat, the CPSA’s position changed. After the war, Bunting claimed that the SL had a “big influence on thinking during that period, and the mood of the soldiers, the opinions of the soldiers changed during the war”.<sup>798</sup> He argues that “it was mainly the anti-Nazi current that was spread during the war and generated automatically by the war which influenced the soldiers, and they moved considerably to the left”.<sup>799</sup> CPSA members, such as Bernstein and Carneson, have emphasised the contribution of the work of the SL to the leftward shift in opinion among many soldiers at the expense of other contributing factors.<sup>800</sup>

Personal accounts of other men, like Kodesh, reveal the combination of factors that influenced soldiers’ political views. For Kodesh, participation in the SL was less significant than exposure to the devastation of war in his political awakening. In an interview after the war he described how fighting in Italy had politicised him, “...what I saw there I think probably politicised me even - yes, the Legion played a big part the [*sic*.] - even more than anything else”.<sup>801</sup> Thus efforts by the CPSA members to politicise and convert servicemen to a more leftist persuasion had varied success. Bunting concedes that despite the number of CPSA members that found their way into the SL, membership was not exclusively leftist, with ex-NP and UP supporters also joining,<sup>802</sup> which suggests that for the soldiers, political affiliation may have been a side issue in the pursuit of the serviceman’s collective interests.

Although politically aware soldiers with predominantly leftist views initiated the creation of the SL, its pursuit of the collective interest meant that the movement attracted the membership of soldiers of all political views. However, the leftist leanings of the SL’s leadership allowed the CPSA to use the SL as a vehicle to propagate their ideas, thereby creating the impression that the SL represented a leftward shift in the soldiers’ political disposition. Furthermore, the concentration of soldiers with

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<sup>796</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A3299 E1, Hilder and Rusty Bernstein Papers, ‘Interview by Terri Barnes for the ANC / University of Connecticut Oral History Project, Cape Town, 28 February 2001’

<sup>797</sup> Lambert, ‘Their Finest Hour?’, 61; Lazerson, *Against the Tide*, 58; Roos, *Ordinary Springboks*, 74.

<sup>798</sup> UWC-Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, RF/6/5, Pinnock Interviews, ‘Interview with Brian Bunting by Don Pinnock’, <http://www.ruthfirstpapers.org.uk/>.

<sup>799</sup> UWC-Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, ‘Interview with Brian Bunting by Don Pinnock’, <http://www.ruthfirstpapers.org.uk/>.

<sup>800</sup> Bernstein, *Memory Against Forgetting*, 56–57.

<sup>801</sup> SAHA, AL2640, ‘Interview with Wolfie Kodesh by J Fredrikse’.

<sup>802</sup> UWC-Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, ‘Interview with Brian Bunting by Don Pinnock’, <http://www.ruthfirstpapers.org.uk/>.

similar political disposition and habitus together in one soldier's movement, not only reinforced the left's already insular community, but had also blinded them to the possibility that their efforts had not pushed the ordinary soldier's political views leftward as far as they claimed. The next section discusses the official UDF response to the war's political context.

### 3.4.2 Looking to a more liberal future (AES)

As the soldiers were forming the SL, liberal academics identified the requirement to address the inroads that anti-government and Nazi propaganda had been making in South Africa and possibly the UDF. In 1940, aware of the educational programme of the British Army, the Minister of Finance, Jan Hofmeyr, suggested that the Secretary of Education, Professor MC Botha, investigate the possibility of a similar programme in the UDF. However, Professor Hoernlé, a philosophy professor at Wits and leading liberal, pre-empted Botha by convening a meeting at the Wits on 10 September 1940, to discuss a similar educational scheme.<sup>803</sup> The meeting agreed that such a scheme should not only focus on providing an understanding of why the war was necessary but also focused on providing an antidote to boredom and intellectual stimulation to those soldiers who wanted to continue their studies after the war.<sup>804</sup> At the same time, Leo and Nell Marquard had also written to Hofmeyr with a proposed scheme for political education in the UDF. Their proposal expanded on Hoernlé's suggestion by recommending the establishment of a specially trained corps of educators for the task. Hofmeyr subsequently passed the baton to Malherbe, the Director of Census and Statistics who had become the DMI. Malherbe, appealing to the military's love for new organisational structures, redrafted Marquard's letter for Smuts's approval.<sup>805</sup> In the motivation Malherbe appealed to Smuts's philosophy of Holism and a desire to unify White South Africans:

One of the main ideas [underpinning the AES] is to consolidate and consciously to formulate the spirit of co-operation at present existing between Afrikaans-speaking and English-speaking men in the field as a result of their doing a common job and of facing danger together. It is hoped that this spirit will constitute the foundation for building a united South Africa after the war - and to outgrow the present rather terrible state of political cannibalism into which South Africa has fallen.<sup>806</sup>

By 1941, the various independent efforts by prominent liberals to shape the idle minds of the soldiers had converged into the AES.

Although the liberal academics had conceived the scheme to combat boredom among soldiers and stimulate intellectual development, by the time the idea had reached Smuts for approval, it had developed explicit political ambitions. Following Smuts's approval in February 1941, Malherbe and

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<sup>803</sup> Monama, 'Wartime Propaganda In the Union of South Africa 1939-1945', 80; Malherbe, *Never a Dull Moment*, 215. See also Roos, 'The Second World War, the Army Education Scheme and the 'Discipline' of the White Poor in South Africa', 645–59.

<sup>804</sup> Cardo, 'Fighting a Worse Imperialism', 147.

<sup>805</sup> Cardo, 148.

<sup>806</sup> Cardo, 144.

Marquard set about establishing the AES. Malherbe selected information officers individually from soldiers that were already in the combat zones, to ensure that the information officer had credibility among the soldiers. The recruitment of Gerald Gordon was typical of Malherbe's style:

At an outpost in North Africa's desert one bleak morning I was in my dugout, a young private twiddling the knobs of a battered wireless set to get the day's news from the regiment. Imagine my astonishment when a colonel clambered down the steps and without any military 'bull' said, 'Good morning Gordon, I want you in my outfit. They tell me you are a well-informed and active chap. I'll make you an officer'.<sup>807</sup>

By the end of April 1941, the first Information Officer course had been conducted in Voortrekkerhoogte, after which 30 Information Officers were commissioned.<sup>808</sup> The work of the information officer was primarily to stimulate debate on pressing political and social concerns of the soldiers. To achieve this, the AES established 'Soldiers parliaments' and debating societies and provided a conduit for books from South Africa to the soldiers. The information officer became a valuable conduit for discussions between the soldiers and the military administration. An example of the information officer's role as the representative of the soldiers' concerns is the election of Percy Niehaus, an information officer and former assistant Attorney General of South West Africa, to fly to South Africa to present the views of soldier-farmers to the South African government.<sup>809</sup>

The involvement of Malherbe and Marquard in the AES's final design caused a duality in the conceptual foundation of the AES. Michael Cardo identifies the internal tension by pointing out that, although both Malherbe and Marquard "were united in their opposition to Afrikaner nationalist republicanism", each man pursued a different liberal agenda within the AES. Malherbe sought to "counter the appeal of an exclusivist Afrikaner nationalism as espoused by DF Malan's *gesuiwerdes*" (Afrikaner Purists),<sup>810</sup> and hoped to shape the post-war society using the AES instructors as a catalyst:

We have to prepare South African citizens to meet the difficult adjustments that will come after the war. These officers and men, after they are demilitarised, will act as a powerful and salutary leaven amongst their own folks when they get home in the different parts of South Africa. Special attention should be paid to the needs of the Afrikaans-speaking troops and it is essential that the majority of these 'political' instructors should be thoroughly proficient in Afrikaans.<sup>811</sup>

Whereas, Marquard was concerned with "the rising clamour of African nationalist voices insisting on full citizenship rights",<sup>812</sup> and pushed further to criticise the UP's unworkable position of race relations.

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<sup>807</sup> Malherbe, *Never a Dull Moment*, 217.

<sup>808</sup> Malherbe, 216–17.

<sup>809</sup> Cardo, 'Fighting a Worse Imperialism', 155.

<sup>810</sup> Cardo, 144–145.

<sup>811</sup> Cardo, 149.

<sup>812</sup> Cardo, 'Fighting a Worse Imperialism', 145.

In 1942, Marquard revised the book *A Black Man's Burden* which was widely read by information officers (as AES officers became known), and soldiers, like Brown, who sought answers to South Africa's race problem.<sup>813</sup> The nuanced differences between Marquard and Malherbe allowed for an AES vision which accommodated both a unified White South Africanism and a tolerance for the extension of rights to Blacks in South Africa. Both Cardo and Roos argue that the AES provided a possible resolution of the South African race question which "was not principally concerned with the exclusion of blacks from the body politic".<sup>814</sup> In this way, the AES reconciled 'South Africanism' and liberalism as progressive political forces during the war.<sup>815</sup>

The information officers embraced Malherbe's South-Africanist agenda. Izak (Sakkies) Fourie, who had left the rectorate of the University College of the Orange Free State to become the information officer of the 2 SA Div, emphasised the need for reconciliation between the White populations of South Africa. Just like Malherbe, Fourie also focused on preparing a unified White population for a post-war South Africa. He emphasised to his division that:

they were fighting for the free democracy Afrikaans and English South Africans [that] had struggled for centuries, [for] the freedom to elect their own government and to tell the government what sort of a better South Africa they wanted to build after the war.<sup>816</sup>

Although Malherbe's South Africanist agenda attracted like-minded liberals to the AES, radical left-wing servicemen found resonance with Marquard's experimentation with Marxist theory in his book *A Black Man's Burden*. Increasingly, soldiers sympathetic to the CPSA, or at least concerned with race relations, also found their way into the AES. According to Arenstein, servicemen who were members of the CPSA, made a conscious effort to use the AES as a front for the pursuit of radical politicisation. As Arenstein stated, they wanted to use the AES to "capture intact the more progressive elements of the White working-class—those who had volunteered to serve in the UDF", much like they had done in the SL.<sup>817</sup>

Several CPSA members, including Arenstein, Bunting, Roy du Preez, and Guy Routh, successfully became information officers.<sup>818</sup> The presence of communist soldiers in the AES made Marquard suspicious. When he noticed that O'Meara had attended the second AES course, he warned that lone tracked socialism or dialectic socialist rhetoric was insufficient for an information officer's task. He argued instead for an empirically based approach, which would gently nudge the soldiers to

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<sup>813</sup> Cardo, 159.

<sup>814</sup> Cardo, 'Fighting a Worse Imperialism', 145; Roos, 'The Second World War, the Army Education Scheme and the 'Discipline' of the White Poor in South Africa', 645-656.

<sup>815</sup> Cardo, 'Fighting a Worse Imperialism', 146.

<sup>816</sup> Cardo, 155-56.

<sup>817</sup> Roos, 'The Second World War, the Army Education Scheme and the 'Discipline' of the White Poor in South Africa', 654.

<sup>818</sup> Roos, 654.

realise the need for liberal changes after the war.<sup>819</sup> Although both Marquard and Malherbe were suspicious of the SL, they tolerated both the inclusion of Springbok legionnaires in the AES and the SL's leftist agenda.<sup>820</sup>

The philosophical underpinnings of the AES, the strong academic nature of the work and the AES selection and qualification criteria favoured university graduates, who soon dominated the AES.<sup>821</sup> Malherbe's bias towards university graduates was vindicated in the previously mentioned 1944 AES survey, which found that on average soldiers with academic qualifications had a more liberal disposition. Table 3.9 is extracted from the AES report that indicated that higher levels of education had had a liberalising influence on servicemen, which is particularly evident when comparing the responses from university graduates with those soldiers who had only completed Standard VI or less.

**Table 3.9: Education and racial attitude among UDF soldiers**<sup>822</sup>

	In favour for more job opportunities for [Black Africans]	In favour for more book learning for [Black Africans]	In favour for more political rights for [Black Africans]
<b>University</b>	84%	85%	77%
<b>Matric</b>	73%	75%	63%
<b>Junior Certificate</b>	49%	55%	41%
<b>Std VI and less</b>	30%	39%	27%

Malherbe was especially proud of the academic qualifications of the information officers, both during and after the war. In his memoirs, he estimated that over the four years of the war he trained about 350 information officers, of whom 40 were women trained to serve in the various Woman's Auxiliary forces and services.<sup>823</sup> Malherbe proudly boasted that among the information officers there were six that held doctoral degrees, 15 master's degrees and others were chartered accountants, advocates, and university lecturers.<sup>824</sup> Malherbe on his retirement traced the post-war careers of the information officers and counted among them 19 lawyers, 35 teachers, 21 university staff, and 48 involved in national affairs. Of the 48, two had become senators, one a cabinet minister, and one a party president.<sup>825</sup> For Malherbe, the information officers' educational qualifications, status and success validated his project.

Within the sample group, the tendency of university graduates to gravitate to the AES is reflected, with Table 3.10 providing a profile of the sample's information officers, being ex-servicemen that entered into post-war politics. As can be seen in Table 3.10, 17 (15 males and 2 females) of the 153

<sup>819</sup> Cardo, 'Fighting a Worse Imperialism', 160.

<sup>820</sup> Cardo, 160.

<sup>821</sup> Malherbe, *Never a Dull Moment*, 216–17.

<sup>822</sup> Malherbe, 'Race Attitudes and Education', 12–14.

<sup>823</sup> Malherbe, *Never a Dull Moment*, 219.

<sup>824</sup> Monama, 'Wartime Propaganda In the Union of South Africa 1939-1945', 225.

<sup>825</sup> Malherbe, *Never a Dull Moment*, 218–19.

selected servicemen were information officers. All except one, Clapham, had completed tertiary education before the war. Five were involved in the legal profession before the war, six held appointments in education (three teachers and three university-based academics), and two were involved in agriculture.

**Table 3.10: AES officers' occupations (n=153)<sup>826</sup>**

SN	Initials	Surname	Rank	Occupation pre-war	Pre-war Academic Qualification
1	LH	Marquard	Lt Col	Teacher (Grey College)	BA (Oxford)
2	JL	Horak	Capt	Argiculturalist	BA LLB (UNISA-Pretoria)
3	G	Gordon	Capt	Lawyer	BA LLB (Cape Town)
4	I S	Fourie	Capt	Academic (Free State University)	BA, BA(Hons) (Free State, Oxford)
5	G H	Durrant	Capt	Academic (Natal University)	BA, Teaching Diploma (Cambridge)
6	LI	Rubin	Lt	Lawyer	BA LLB (Wits)
7	JJ	O'Meara	Lt	Teacher	Probable degree
8	JPdM	Niehaus	Lt	Attorney	BA LLB (Cape Town) LLM (London)
9	C	Bekker	Lt	Mining Geologist	BSc (Wits)
10	L	Kuper	Lt	Attorney	BA LLB (Wits)
11	HBM	Joseph	Lt (Ms)	Social Worker	BA(Hons) (London)
12	JEG	Hasting Beck (né de Villiers)	Lt (Ms)	Academic (Cape Town University)	BA LLB (Cape Town)
13	VJ	Clapham	Lt	Artist Writer	None
14	B P	Bunting	Lt	Journalist	BA(Hons) (Wits)
15	VCH	Brown	Lt	Teacher	BA (Wits)
16	AID	Brown	Lt	Lawyer	BA LLB (Rhodes)
17	CG	Starke	Cpl	Farmer	Diploma in Agriculture

However, some South African historians have disputed the efficacy of the AES in politicising the serviceman. Michael Cardo is doubtful of the AES's success in "persuading white soldiers to 'go into politics' with a view to improving conditions for black South Africans".<sup>827</sup> Roos is more disparaging, arguing that "the postwar history of White volunteers suggests that the liberal democratic brand of South Africanism that inspired the formation of the AES and underpinned its curriculum had little appeal beyond the small coterie of 'AES intellectuals'"<sup>828</sup>; however, for those who had been involved in the AES, it was a successful project. Being an information officer, had politicised Ms Joseph, as she stated:

A new world was opening up for me, a new vision and new knowledge. I began to view the South African scene with new and better-informed eyes. As I studied the conditions in which

<sup>826</sup> Table developed by Author from, DOD Archive, PA; UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information File 35, Biographies 1951-1976; UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information, File 65 1 5 (part 2), General Election 1953 UP Candidates Information; *South African Who's Who 1948-1976* and selected Biographies and Obituaries.

<sup>827</sup> Cardo, 'Fighting a Worse Imperialism', 164.

<sup>828</sup> Roos, 'The Second World War, the Army Education Scheme and the 'Discipline' of the White Poor in South Africa', 656-57.



black children struggled for education and opportunity, and compared them to how most whites lived, I began to feel ashamed of my own position as a white. Talking about democracy brought home to me that the black people did not share it with me. I had a parliamentary vote and they did not. As I spelt it out to the WAAFs, so I spelt it out to myself, questioning my own values as never before. I did not turn immediately into a socialist, far from it, but I began to see people as human beings, regardless of colour, began to have some idea of how the other half of the South African world lived.<sup>829</sup>

Both Malherbe and Bunting, who were part of the AES, referred to the previously mentioned 1944 AES survey as evidence of the liberalising effect of education, the AES and the war experience.<sup>830</sup>

Bunting argued:

...soldiers' attitudes on the position of Africans in society and so on changed during the war. They took up a much more progressive stance, particularly amongst the Afrikaners, because taken away from the Dutch Reformed Church and the Nationalist Party into the Army, exposed to the ideas of army education under Marquard...<sup>831</sup>

For Bunting, the progressive shift achieved by participation in the fight against Nazism and Fascism endured beyond the battlefields of North Africa, extending to the home front.<sup>832</sup> Carneson, as a signaller and friend of Bunting, saw the AES efforts as complementary to the progressive struggle as "the nature of the war and the struggle that was being fought at that stage favoured the development of progressive ideas".<sup>833</sup> Roos speculates that the AES narrative and its post-war ambitions "resonated with their [servicemen's] own personal narratives for joining the UDF".<sup>834</sup> The AES did however frame the servicemen's participation in the war within a liberal rhetoric and provided a moral justification for their involvement. Whether the justification led to liberal political activism is discussed in the next chapters.

Even Malherbe was doubtful of the long-term tenacity of the liberalising effect of the AES. In 1946, at the Hornlé Memorial Lecture titled *Race Attitudes and Education*, he argued that the liberal attitudes of the ex-servicemen were context-dependent and would not survive the opposing societal pressure prevalent in post-war South Africa. He therefore proposed that the Minister of Education establish a similar adult education scheme in civilian life.<sup>835</sup> He believed that unless this happens the changes in political views of the servicemen made during the war would "simply slip back once the war is over".<sup>836</sup>

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<sup>829</sup> Joseph, *Side by Side*, 27.

<sup>830</sup> Malherbe, 'Race Attitudes and Education', 11.

<sup>831</sup> UWC-Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, 'Interview with Brian Bunting by Don Pinnock', <http://www.ruthfirstpapers.org.uk/>.

<sup>832</sup> Roos, 'The Second World War, the Army Education Scheme and the 'Discipline' of the White Poor in South Africa', 656.

<sup>833</sup> SAHA, AL2640, 'Interview with F Carneson by J Fredrickse'.

<sup>834</sup> Roos, 'The Second World War, the Army Education Scheme and the 'Discipline' of the White Poor in South Africa', 656.

<sup>835</sup> Malherbe, 'Race Attitudes and Education', 24.

<sup>836</sup> Cardo, 'Fighting a Worse Imperialism', 163.

Cardo believes that Malherbe's concern was well-founded, claiming that most information officers soon lost their idealism when faced with the realities of civilian life.<sup>837</sup> However, many liberals, led by Marquard, were not as pessimistic as Malherbe regarding the durability of wartime experience. By 1944, Marquard believed that the leftward shift among servicemen had been substantial enough to influence national politics in the form of either a new political party or a solid progressive wing within the UP.<sup>838</sup> Thus, although the war may have made the soldiers' habitus more receptive to leftist views, the liberals doubted the resilience of such changes when exposed to South African society on the soldiers' return. The following chapters include the role that these liberal ex-servicemen played in the post-war UP.

### 3.5 RETURN TO THE UNION

Soldiers returning to South Africa from the war often felt alienated from the broader South African community. Soldiers having shared experiences of regimentalisation, discipline and dangers, harboured both a sense of solidarity with each other and a sense of entitlement for society.<sup>839</sup> The sense of solidarity and entitlement reinforced the ex-serviceman identity to which the soldier could relate, thereby transforming their participation in the military field into peacetime social capital. A sense of listlessness and alienation also made the soldiers susceptible to political ideologies that promised a better future. Politicised soldiers such as Hodgson, who returned from North Africa in 1942, would gravitate towards the CPSA offices for discussions on socialism.<sup>840</sup> Brown, who fought in the Italian campaign in 1945 experienced a similar period of dislocation, choosing instead to pursue a career in agriculture.<sup>841</sup> He felt like many others when he thought "Well, to hell with it, this world now owes me a peaceful life".<sup>842</sup>

However, despite being disengaged soldiers soon realised that "... everything at home wasn't as it should be".<sup>843</sup> Although the war had changed Brown, these changes had not yet surfaced in his habitus beyond a lingering unease regarding South African society. Lovell, who had commanded Malay and Indian soldiers in East Africa, had been quicker to identify the casual racism of South African society as a critical concern:

Life in the Army outside of the borders of the Union, where our men were precious to us as soldiers whose wellbeing was our first care, tended to emphasise their worth as human beings, without reference to the colour of their skins. I was therefore quite

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<sup>837</sup> Cardo, *Opening Men's Eyes*, 172.

<sup>838</sup> Cardo, 'Fighting a Worse Imperialism', 170; Roos, 'The Second World War, the Army Education Scheme and the 'Discipline' of the White Poor in South Africa', 656-657.

<sup>839</sup> Oosthuizen, 'The Demobilisation of the White Union Defence Force Soldiers During and After the Second World War', 25-27.

<sup>840</sup> Bernstein, *Memory Against Forgetting*, 55.

<sup>841</sup> Cardo, *Opening Men's Eyes*, 43.

<sup>842</sup> Cardo, 44.

<sup>843</sup> APC, OHP, 'Interview with Dr Peter Brown conducted by Prof Norman Bromberger in Pietermaritzburg, 21 August 1995'.

shocked to find on my return how ingrained colour prejudice still was among my white compatriots.<sup>844</sup>

Military service, which had separated the soldier from South African society, had awakened a sense of shared humanity in them, which set him apart from those that had not fought.

Even though the soldier's isolation and alienation from South African society had made them more sensitive to the racial prejudice common in South Africa, not all soldiers were shocked into activism. Thus, the war had a different influence on these men, especially, for the servicemen who had undertaken political work under the umbrella of the SL. In some cases, the war had stripped the servicemen of their radical idealism rather than nurture it. O'Meara's political work among the ordinary soldiers during the war had disillusioned him. He soon withdrew from CPSA activities:

John O'Meara, who I mentioned to you, he had been a Party [CPSA] member and a very prominent figure in the army, in the Springbok Legion, but when he came back he was just completely deflated because - I don't know, in his first speech to the Party members when he came back, he said that people mustn't expect too much from the ex-soldiers because they had been used to a certain sort of lifestyle...<sup>845</sup>

For others, a political awakening occurred only after the war. As a student at Cambridge, Brown and his friends went to heckle the South African born author, Peter Abrahams. Instead of heckling Abrahams, the engagement painfully reminded him of the "brutality and the injustice of the South African racial order..."<sup>846</sup> shaking him out of his political hiatus. For Brown, it was the Coloured political activist and poet, Abrahams, that made him decide to "get involved in something else apart from learning how to be a farmer".<sup>847</sup> Thus, soldiers returning to the Union, after a period of isolation and alienation from the home front, could see more clearly the ills in South African society. This was partially because war experience had changed them too much, and partially because the war had not changed South Africa enough. For some servicemen, it appeared as if the country had not fully grasped the profound societal changes that had occurred globally, triggered by the war. Instead, the country that they fought to protect against extreme right-wing ideologies had held onto and hardened its pre-existing racial beliefs.

### 3.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter tracked the volunteer from volunteering, through the war and to final demobilisation. Much like the previous chapter showed the heterogeneous nature of the South African society, this chapter highlights that war experience varied and therefore did not have a singular politicising effect. Not only did the soldiers experience the war through different lenses or habitus, based on their social

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<sup>844</sup> Lovell, *For the Love of Justice*, 120.

<sup>845</sup> UWC-Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, 'Interview with Brian Bunting by Don Pinnock', <http://www.ruthfirstpapers.org.uk/>.

<sup>846</sup> Cardo, *Opening Men's Eyes*, 49.

<sup>847</sup> APC, OHP, 'Interview with Dr Peter Brown conducted by Prof Norman Bromberger in Pietermaritzburg, 21 August 1995'.

and cultural backgrounds, but there was insufficient consistency in actual war experience to have ensured a common politicised habitus.

Although mobilisation had disrupted the social structures of the volunteers, the sample group experienced the levelling effect of military training differently. Almost half of the sample group had evaded the worst of this social dislocation as they transformed their civilian social capital into the military field. However, for those that did not, the levelling effect of military service broadened their political perspectives which influenced their habitus towards a more liberal disposition.

Subsequent experiences of combat also varied substantially between Africa and Italy. The African campaigns removed the South African soldiers from the social strictures of South African society. They fought alongside a diversity of Allied soldiers, of different races and classes, which soon accentuated their shared White South African identity. However, attempts to transcend race divisions were met with mixed responses from the soldiers and discouraged by the UDF. In contrast, in Italy, South African soldiers were confronted with war's destructive and degradative effects. The political and cultural background of the soldiers fundamentally shaped their interpretation with radical-left soldiers identifying similarities between Italy's and South Africa's societal divisions and derived solace from the successes of the Italian communist partisans. Younger and more impressionable soldiers experienced a greater dislocation of their pre-war habitus and came away with an aversion to fascism and authoritarian governments. For prisoners, the POW experience added another layer of obligation and loyalty that set them apart from even the other soldiers. Thus, the war resulted in overlapping, yet different political experiences among the ex-servicemen. However, a combination of factors, including social dislocation, the age of a soldier and the intensity of the experience, meant that the Italian campaign probably had a greater impact on the habitus and later political disposition of the soldiers that fought there.

Both conscious efforts to politicise the soldiers, one from among the soldiers and one from the UDF, had varied results. For the radical-left activist, the SL had become another layer of obligation, solidarity and identity, strengthening an already established network. Similarly, the AES brought together a cluster of liberally-minded soldiers, availing them an opportunity to propagate a liberal perspective for South Africa. These initiatives likely influenced the protagonists more than achieving the aim of instilling a more progressive view among the soldiers. The enduring legacy of both organisations was an invaluable experience as political organisers gained access to resilient networks of like-minded political activists who later joined their ranks

Separated from the South African home front, both physically and psychologically, soldiers saw South African society from new and broader perspectives due to war experiences. The subsequent alienation and otherness that the returning soldier had experienced increased the feeling of solidarity among the ex-servicemen. This solidarity solidified the ex-serviceman status as an identity and

consolidated the ex-serviceman's accrued social capital in the form of networks of loyalty, obligation and identity, which transcended political views and differences in habitus. Thus, to expect an ex-serviceman's identity to have unified and aligned their political views and attitudes, is maybe casting the idea of Tylden's typology of a unique South Africa soldier too broadly.

Although the ex-serviceman identity may not have reflected a single or shared political habitus, it did provide the ex-servicemen with a source of social capital to use in the civilian and political field. The following chapters address how the ex-servicemen capitalised on ex-serviceman identity and war experience in the political field. It also tracks how the varied war experience had influenced the ex-serviceman's habitus towards particular political positions.

**CHAPTER FOUR:****EX-SERVICEMEN'S INVOLVEMENT IN PARLIAMENTARY AND EXTRA-PARLIAMENTARY POST-WAR POLITICS, 1946-1953**

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**4.1 INTRODUCTION**

Chapter Two discussed the biographic profile of the ex-servicemen that would emerge in post-war politics. The chapter showed that the deep race and class divisions in South Africa also ran through the White community. These divisions meant that these ex-servicemen had not emerged from a homogeneous habitus or generic political disposition, but instead had separate but overlapping backgrounds. The ex-servicemen in the sample stand apart from the 'ordinary' soldier. The men in the sample had similar schooling that transcended the traditional cultural divisions and on average they also had better occupations, thereby embedding them into the political and social hegemony of the time. Chapter three tracked the melting pot of military service throughout the war. Although the war had created a shared ex-servicemen identity, Chapter Three showed that from a political perspective, the war had not influenced the ex-servicemen's habitus homogeneously. The diversity of war-experience, coupled with the servicemen's already varied background, meant that the war had not shaped the soldiers' political views uniformly, or dislodged previous political views. Instead, the ex-serviceman's previous habitus and political exposure often framed their perspective of the war. For those already disposed to radical and liberal perspectives, the experience of combat, fighting against fascism and a growing sense of international liberalism served to confirm their views and even entrench it further. For others, the politicising efforts of both the Army Education Scheme (AES) and Springbok Legion (SL) had introduced some to liberal and radical perspectives to which they had not been exposed prior to war service. Thus, the influence of the war was as variegated as the men's backgrounds and war experience.

Among radical and liberal activists, the war had created an expectation of continued liberal reform in South Africa.<sup>848</sup> However, for returning ex-servicemen, who had been separated from South African society while fighting up north, the South Africa that confronted them seemed to have become more, not less, racialised and segregated. Despite feelings of alienation and otherness, radical and liberal ex-servicemen, on their return to civilian life, were still enthusiastic that liberal political reforms would continue after the war.<sup>849</sup> The more conservative ex-servicemen, as part of

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<sup>848</sup> Lazerson, *Against the Tide*, 54.

<sup>849</sup> M Susser, 'A Personal History: Social Medicine in a South African Setting, 1952–5. Part 2: Social Medicine as a Calling: Ups, Downs, and Politics in Alexandra Township', *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health*, 60, no. 8 (2006), 662.



the political hegemony of Jan Smuts's 'South Africanism', expected to slip back into the pre-war status quo.<sup>850</sup>

This chapter explores how ex-servicemen transitioned from wartime service into post-war politics. The chapter maps out the interactions between the veteran community and the political parties opposing the National Party (NP). The discussion covers both the ex-servicemen's involvement in parliamentary and extra-parliamentary politics. The discussion follows how the politicised ex-servicemen in political parties, such as the United Party (UP), Labour Party (LP) and Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA), and ex-servicemen movements transformed the ex-serviceman identity and the rhetoric of the war into a coherent political constituency between 1948 and 1953.

## 4.2 RETURNING SERVICEMEN AND POLITICS 1946-1948

### 4.2.1 The continuation of soldier activism after the war

The Union Defence Force (UDF) discharged soldiers throughout the war in an uncoordinated manner. Smut's appointment of Harry Lawrence as Minister of Welfare and responsible for demobilisation in August 1943 was the first indication of a coordinated plan to repatriate soldiers back home. By 1 April 1944, Lawrence had consolidated control over the demobilisation structures and by 28 April 1944, he had presented a 'Springbok Charter' or demobilisation plan to Parliament for approval.<sup>851</sup> Table 4.1 shows the discharge dates of the ex-servicemen in the sample. Most of the sample group were demobilised and discharged between 1945 and 1946. The withdrawal of the 1 South African Division (1 SA Div) from North Africa caused an increased number of discharges in 1943.

**Table 4.1: Release date of sample group (n=153)<sup>852</sup>**

Year of discharge	Number of discharged in sample group
1941	1
1942	3
1943	15
1944	9
1945	67
1946	34
1947	6
1948	2
1952	1
1953	1
Unknown	14
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>153</b>

<sup>850</sup> Graaff, *Div Looks Back*, 115-118.

<sup>851</sup> Oosthuizen, 'The demobilisation of the White Union Defence Force Soldiers During and After the Second World War', 45.

<sup>852</sup> Table developed by the Author from DOD Archive, PA.

Upon their discharge and demobilisation, ex-servicemen faced the challenges of reintegration into society. For the ex-servicemen under consideration, these challenges went beyond only settling back into quotidian, civilian life. It was during this demobilisation and reintegration process that the influence of the war on these men became accentuated and ushered them into the political environment. The war had awakened a sense of socio-political responsibility in many of the sample group. However, their interpretation of this responsibility varied as much as their war experience. This section tracks their emergence onto the national political stage directly after the war until the 1948 elections and deals with student politics, parliamentary party politics and extra-parliamentary politics.

One commonality shared by these men was the foreknowledge that the war had instilled in them a sense of responsibility to either guard the South African status quo or to change it through political activism. For instance, Mervyn Susser, a survivor of Sidi Rezegh, later a pilot in Italy and a post-war medical student at the University of Witwatersrand (Wits), found that his wartime struggles demanded activism:

The horrific Nazi ideology had provided the personal impetus for entering the struggle five years before. Thereafter, my main criterion for postwar life slowly evolved into a sense that whatever I undertook, it should be not only benign but socially and politically useful.<sup>853</sup>

Susser's newfound sense of social and political purpose motivated him to study medicine after the war. He found his purpose when he provided medical services to impoverished communities.<sup>854</sup> Similarly, Fred Carneson found purpose in furthering the political work that he and others had undertaken during the war:

...there was a whole group of us in the army who said when...the war's finished, we [are] not going to go back to ordinary jobs - we're going to go and do full time political work one way or another, and we did...we just got straight into political work and activity, and some of us full time...<sup>855</sup>

Thus, several ex-servicemen launched into political activism after the war. Many were further animated with the emerging post-war social liberalism and equated the nationalist right in South Africa with Fascism.<sup>856</sup> The Afrikaner nationalist's flirtation with fascism before and during the war was thus not forgotten. Those with liberal and radical dispositions were willing to collaborate and work within the established White political framework to oppose the NP. Since they saw the NP as a Fascist-tinged party, they believed their post-war fight against the NP at home was an extension of their military duty of fighting such regimes abroad. Many saw the fight against racism as part and

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<sup>853</sup> M Susser, 'A Personal History Social Medicine in a South African Setting, 1952–5. Part 1: The Shape of Ideas Forged in the Second World War', *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health*, 60, no. 7 (2006), 554–57.

<sup>854</sup> Susser, 'A Personal History: Social Medicine in a South African Setting, 1952–5. Part 2', 662.

<sup>855</sup> SAHA, AL2460, 'Interview with F Carneson by J Fredrickse'.

<sup>856</sup> Horn, 'South African Prisoner -of-War Experience during and after World War II : 1939-c.1950', 234.

parcel of this struggle. As Colin Eglin argued "... with the whole growth of the movement of human rights around the world, following the defeat of Nazism, the issue of black-white relations became more and more important in South Africa."<sup>857</sup> Thus, the NP's dubious wartime loyalties were brought back into focus and roused many ex-servicemen towards political activism.

Despite this commonality among these ex-servicemen, they pursued their political activism in various forms and through a variety of platforms. Some men used the opportunities offered by universities to pursue their political agenda. Part of the state's demobilisation scheme involved offering younger soldiers, who had interrupted their studies to fight or had volunteered directly after school, preferential access to further their studies by lowering the entry requirements. Joe Slovo, for instance, had not finished his senior certificate before the war. After the war he received a five-year scholarship after passing his matriculation exemption exam, "designed for illiterate ex-servicemen."<sup>858</sup> Further education allowed ex-servicemen to fill professional vocations and thus gain access to the middle-class, which would lessen the economic burden on the state to take care of ex-servicemen in financial need.<sup>859</sup> Slovo and Harry Schwarz, an South African Air Force (SAAF) pilot during the war, were able to use this opportunity to gain a tertiary education to pursue legal studies at Wits to finally become attorneys.<sup>860</sup> The opportunity to study provided the ex-servicemen with the opportunity to transfer their social capital accrued in the military field into the professional field after the war.

Many other returning ex-servicemen accepted the state's demobilisation offer to obtain a university education. Already a year after the end of the war, many ex-servicemen engulfed student life at various universities across South Africa. For instance, in 1946, of the 1189 students enrolled at Rhodes University, 464 were ex-servicemen.<sup>861</sup> Similarly at the University of Natal, 650 of the 1 950 registrations were ex-servicemen.<sup>862</sup> Eglin, having returned to the University of Cape Town to finish his degree, recalled that ex-servicemen were able to dominate the campus because they were "a few years older, more mature, and determined to make up for the academic years they had forfeited."<sup>863</sup> The soldiers soon exploited their maturity and experience to dominate student politics.

For some ex-servicemen, war service did not only grant them the opportunity to obtain a university education, and thereby better their career prospects, but also provided them with the tools to

<sup>857</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2242, Hackland, 'Interview with Colin Eglin by B Hackland'; Wits Historical Papers, A2521 aa, David Everatt Papers, 'Memoirs Len Lee-Warden', 1.

<sup>858</sup> Slovo, *Slovo: The Unfinished Autobiography*, 31–32.

<sup>859</sup> Oosthuizen, 'The demobilisation of the White Union Defence Force Soldiers During and After the Second World War', 59.

<sup>860</sup> Lodge, 'Secret Party', 441. Slovo's status and income as an advocate was silently resented by the other communists.

<sup>861</sup> SA Greyling, 'Rhodes University During the Segregation and Apartheid Eras, 1933 To 1990' (Masters thesis, Rhodes University, 2007), 29.

<sup>862</sup> B Guest, *Stella Aurorae: The History of a South African University Volume 1 Natal University College (1909-1949)* (Pietermaritzburg: Natal Society Foundation, 2015), 241.

<sup>863</sup> Eglin, *Crossing the Borders of Power*, 39.

transform their wartime political awakening into nascent political careers. Ex-servicemen were an easily identified interest group on university campuses, which placed them in a position to consolidate control over leadership positions on Student Representative Councils (SRCs). They included Leo Marquard, Brian Bunting, Rusty Bernstein, Jock Isacowitz and Denis Etheredge. At the University of Natal, Hans Meidner, a Jewish ex-serviceman and former Prisoner of War (POW), became the president of the SRC.<sup>864</sup> At Rhodes University, ex-servicemen, such as David Brokensha, Hamish Dickie-Clark, who had fought in Italy, Murray Carlin, a former POW captured in North Africa and Ian Smith, Royal Air Force (RAF) pilot and future Prime Minister of South Rhodesia, dominated the SRC. Thus, the ex-servicemen, by dominating the country's various university SRCs, emulated their comrades that had participated in student politics before and during the war.

However, the dominance of ex-servicemen in student bodies on various campuses did not necessarily mean a common agenda. Brokensha, as secretary to the Rhodes SRC, opposed Smith, the chairman of the SRC, on issues such as the admission of Black students and initiations.<sup>865</sup> At the Wits, Schwarz, crossed swords with his classmate Slovo in the student political arena.<sup>866</sup> The presence of Susser and other politicised ex-servicemen in the Wits Medical School led to the Afrikaans-medium student paper, *Spore*, to declare the Medical School the heart of "Jewish Negrophilism" in university student politics.<sup>867</sup> Thus, despite the fight against antisemitism and fascism, during the war antisemitism was still prevalent in South African society, a condition that kept the Jewish ex-servicemen engaged in politics. Thus, the post-war universities not only provided ex-servicemen with access to professional occupations and the means to fund their future political careers, but also a platform to develop their political voices.

The selected ex-servicemen did not restrict their political involvement to universities after the war, they also became committed in the broader political discourse. The ex-servicemen who did not enrol in a university after the war made use of other platforms to pursue their political goals.<sup>868</sup> For instance, Wolfie Kodesh immediately became "...involved in politics up to ...[his] neck".<sup>869</sup> Both the SL and the CPSA provided ex-servicemen platforms to counter growing NP political coercion. Ex-servicemen, under the umbrella of the SL, moved to prevent a 1945 NP conference in Johannesburg. Bunting recalled these events:

It was a very busy period after the war, soldiers coming back and so on, ... I don't know whether you remember the occasion when the Legion organised the campaign to get the Nationalist conference driven out of Johannesburg, They organised a huge mob which besieged the town hall, and they got them driven out. Eventually the police said well, you've got to close down the

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<sup>864</sup> Guest, *Stella Aurorae: Volume 1*, 244.

<sup>865</sup> Brokensha, *Brokies Way*.

<sup>866</sup> B Pottinger, 'The Battling Ways of Airman Schwarz', *Sunday Times*, 23.

<sup>867</sup> B Murray, 'The Second World War and student politics at the university of the Witwatersrand', *South African Historical Journal*, 29, no. 1 (1993), 228.

<sup>868</sup> SAHA, AL2460, 'Interview with F Carneson by J Fredrickse'.

<sup>869</sup> SAHA, AL2640, 'Interview with Wolfie Kodesh by J Fredrikse'.

conference and get out, because we can't guarantee your safety! And that was the mood of the ex-soldiers at the time; they were very militant and very angry, and there was a lot of political work going on amongst them.<sup>870</sup>

The tension between the ex-servicemen and the NP continued to fester on the streets as the 1948 elections approached. In the Transvaal, Slovo experienced this violence in his work for the CPSA:

...organised Fascism was once again beginning to show itself some years before the Nationalist victory in 1948. The City Hall steps increasingly became a physical battleground between defenders of the platform and the thugs who were given free reign by the token police contingent in the vicinity. Under the command of ex-servicemen such as George Clayton, Monty Berman and Jack Hodgson, we organised ourselves into defence squads, with fixed positions on the "battlefield".<sup>871</sup>

Ex-servicemen, like Slovo, associated these political clashes with the war. They saw themselves as continuing to carry out their military duty. Thus, they often used military rhetoric to describe its intensity.

It was not only members and supporters of the CPSA that viewed the political tensions and violence in military terms. The UP attracted many ex-servicemen and believed that "It is traditionally a soldier's privilege to grumble, but equally it is traditional to know where his duty lies".<sup>872</sup> Ex-servicemen rallied to protect UP meetings from nationalist disruptions. For instance, in the build-up to the 1948 elections, Sir De Villiers Graaff, as a prominent UP leader in the Cape, recalled that "political meetings could get pretty rough and there was an awful lot of organised heckling which led to bouts of fisticuffs".<sup>873</sup> By 1948 the NP organisers led by FC Erasmus and PW Botha, had so disrupted the UP's campaign in the Cape, that Graaff had to mobilise "a group of ex-servicemen led by Major John Newman"<sup>874</sup> to thwart the NP efforts. Ex-servicemen within political parties found their shared ex-serviceman identity useful to mobilise ordinary ex-servicemen for these electioneering activities.

Ex-servicemen's support for the UP and the LP, which maintained an electoral alliance, was not only based on a general distaste for the NP or an attraction to what these parties represented, but also out of a combination of wartime loyalty and historical family dynasties.<sup>875</sup> Graaff, for instance, believed that his military credentials had provided him with a strong support base in the countryside:

... having served in the 6<sup>th</sup> mounted regiment, which was recruited from the Cape and included people from the Orange River to the far Eastern Cape, and also with the Middellandse Regiment which was recruited largely from the Karoo and the Eastern Cape, there was hardly a town or village in which there was not somebody who had served with me and knew me. In fact in many

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<sup>870</sup> UWC-Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, RF/6/5, Pinnock Interviews, 'Interview with Brian Bunting by Don Pinnock', <http://www.ruthfirstpapers.org.uk/>.

<sup>871</sup> Slovo, *Slovo: The Unfinished Autobiography*, 51.

<sup>872</sup> Oosthuizen, 'The Demobilisation of the White Union Defence Force Soldiers During and After the Second World War', 25.

<sup>873</sup> Graaff, *Div Looks Back*, 120.

<sup>874</sup> Graaff, 120, 125.

<sup>875</sup> Roos, *Ordinary Springboks*, 123.

small villages our committees consisted almost entirely of old comrades who had decided to come in and give a hand.<sup>876</sup>

Prominent ex-servicemen in politics, such as Graaff, used the appeal of familiarity of shared memories and regimental affiliations to transform their social capital from the military field into the political field. Their support base was thus probably built more on personal loyalties than particular political principles.

As stated previously, apart from shared war experience, family connections also came into play. The UP and its supporters emphasised the political lineage of their leaders, with the establishment of family political dynasties. For example, Dr Jan Steytler's constituents expected him to follow his father in politics. He recalled that "...the chaps then came to me and asked me whether I wouldn't be the candidate, because my father used to be in politics before he had died."<sup>877</sup>

Graaff, whose family's political credentials had placed him in the heart of the UP, maps out the interlocking family connections within the Cape branch of the UP:

Col Hannes Faure, a brilliant fighter pilot in World War II, and son of Senator Albie Faurie...was a big influence among the Malays.<sup>878</sup>

My divisional chairman...was none other than J.P. Niehaus of the Strand, who had been my uncle Jacobus's election agent.....and was the father of Percy Niehaus, who later led the United Party in South West Africa.<sup>879</sup>

Thus, after the war, many of the returning ex-servicemen who supported or joined the UP did so more out of family obligation, loyalty to fellow ex-servicemen or because Smuts and the UP embodied the dominant hegemonic perspective in opposition to the tainted nationalist NP.

Demobilisation from the war had reinserted ex-servicemen into the South African political arena. For the radicalised ex-servicemen, the post-war society to which they had returned was rift with violence and political coercion. The tension between their wartime idealism and the coercive nature of post-war politics gave urgency to their political activism. However, for many who re-entered politics in the centralist UP treated the coercive methods of the NP at the hustings as a mere distraction. The next section covers how the politicised SL transitioned from a soldiers' interest group into a political ex-serviceman's movement.

#### 4.2.2 Springbok Legion

As previously discussed, the SL was the most prominent political veteran organisation that had developed during the war and provided ex-servicemen with a sense of continuity in activism after

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<sup>876</sup> Graaff, *Div Looks Back*, 141.

<sup>877</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2242 Hackland, 'Interview with Dr Jan Steytler by B Hackland'.

<sup>878</sup> Graaff, *Div Looks Back*, 123.

<sup>879</sup> Graaff, 120.



their demobilisation.<sup>880</sup> Various ex-servicemen whether leftist, communist, radical, or liberal had joined the SL while fighting at the front. They saw the potential that the SL offered them to advance their own political goals. Radical left ex-servicemen, who had been active in the SL during the war, reaffirmed their commitment to the SL after their demobilisation. As Piet Beyleveld recalled, he became fully involved in ex-servicemen politics after his discharge from the military:

I'd just come back from the Army. I was involved in the Springbok Legion (SL) in 1948 I was a member of the National Executive of the SL Shortly after 1948 I become National Chairman of the SL.<sup>881</sup>

Like Beyleveld other ex-servicemen such as Kodesh also tapped into the SL network upon their return to South Africa.

The increase in the CPSA's influence within the post-war Legion led the communists to believe that they could use the SL as a proxy organisation, to garner prestige for themselves, to attract members for the CPSA and to launch an inter-racial united front against the government.<sup>882</sup> Table 4.2 shows the communist affiliations of prominent legionnaires, indicating the overlap between the CPSA and the SL. Legionnaires that had held prominent positions in the CPSA included Bernstein, Jack Hodgson, John O'Meara and Carneson.

**Table 4.2: The Springbok Legion and communist associated Legionnaires (n=153)<sup>883</sup>**

Ethno-linguistic group	Communist Legionnaires	Springbok Legion
Afrikaans speaking	1	3
English-speaking	9	14
Jewish	8	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>32</b>

Apart from using the SL as a vehicle to attract support, the war had also given the CPSA a new lease on life. Added to this, some in the CPSA interpreted Smuts's acceptance of the Soviet Union as a wartime ally, as tolerance for communism which further increased party membership. Such factors assisted the CPSA to penetrate the White electorate, garnering 11 per cent of the vote in the 1943 elections.<sup>884</sup>

However, this support was deceptive as the CPSA's appeal to the ex-servicemen was not always for reasons of a shared communist ideology. The CPSA provided a home for those uncomfortable

<sup>880</sup> Horn, *In Enemy Hands*, 245-246.

<sup>881</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2521 aa, David Everatt Papers, 'Interview with Piet Beyleveld by David Everatt'.

<sup>882</sup> White, 'The Role of the Springbok Legion in the Communist Party of South Africa's Common Front Strategy, 1941-1950', 100.

<sup>883</sup> Table created by Author from: Slovo, *Slovo: The Unfinished Autobiography*; Bernstein, *Memory Against Forgetting*; DOD Archive, Minister of Defence - Erasmus/Fouché (MVEF) 128, 'Lys Opgestel Deur Die Beredderaar Ingevolge Artikel 4(1) van Die Wet Op Die Onderdrukking van Communisms, 1950 (Wet No.44 van 1950) van Persone Wat Ampsdraers, Beamptes, Lede of Aktiewe Ondersteuners Is of Was van Die Kommunistiese Party van Suid-Afrika'; DOD Archive, PA; Wits Historical Papers, A617, Springbok Legion; University of KwaZulu Natal, Digital Innovation South Africa, [www.disa.ukzn.ac.za](http://www.disa.ukzn.ac.za).

<sup>884</sup> Everatt, *The Origins of Non-Racialism*, 11-12, 51, 61; Carneson, *Red in the Rainbow*, 112.

in the White political hegemony. Bernstein, for example, had initially joined the CPSA because he was “expelled from the Labour Party for sort of being on the leftwing opposition group inside the Labour Party ... So ...[he] had nowhere else to go”.<sup>885</sup> Others joined the CPSA for its non-racial manifesto, “because it was the only non-racial political organisation available at that time...”<sup>886</sup> According to Hymie Basner, a former CPSA member, some ex-servicemen joined the CPSA for a combination of reasons:

... [t]here was no possible party to which a progressive young South African, whether he was a Marxist or ... of moderate liberal views, if he wanted to work in an organised group ... against racialism, if he wanted to work even for common social decency, never mind about world revolution of South African revolution ... there was no room for him to work in any organisation at that time except the communist movement. And during that period hundreds of middle-class youth who would normally, in other countries would be joining the Labour Party or the Liberal Party, say in England or in France ... would join the Communist Party.<sup>887</sup>

According to Leo Kuper, a liberal ex-serviceman who became a professor at the University of Natal, the non-racialist affiliation of the CPSA led to “the progressive redefinition of communism as synonymous with non-discrimination on the basis of race or colour”.<sup>888</sup> Thus, buoyed by a broad membership and supporters, a core group of ex-servicemen in the CPSA sought to exploit the intersection between the SL and the CPSA.

The emergence of an identifiable communist caucus within the Legion had not gone unnoticed and had led to one of the founder’s, Vic Clapham’s, resignation from the SL’s National Executive in 1945/6 and the Legion itself in 1948.<sup>889</sup> Similarly, Isacowitz, the chairman of the Legion and a wartime member of the CPSA, also became “increasingly unhappy” with the growing “totalitarianism” in the post-war CPSA which “offended...[his] conscience”.<sup>890</sup> By 1946 he had left the CPSA but retained the chairmanship of the SL until 1951.<sup>891</sup> Isacowitz thereby was able to temper the communist influence in the SL by being the most prominent liberal voice in this organisation.<sup>892</sup>

However, the increased prominence of communist soldiers among the SL’s leadership after the war led to the opponents of the Legion accusing it of communist sympathies.<sup>893</sup> During the 1946 African mineworkers strike in which CPSA-aligned legionnaires participated, the government accused the SL, of being the “military wing of the [Communist] party”.<sup>894</sup> The increasingly radical voice of the SL’s

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<sup>885</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A3299 E1, Hilder and Rusty Bernstein Papers, ‘Interview by Terri Barnes for the ANC / University of Connecticut Oral History Project, Cape Town, 28 February 2001’

<sup>886</sup> APC, OHP, ‘Interview with Dr Peter Brown conducted by Prof Norman Bromberger’.

<sup>887</sup> Everatt, *The Origins of Non-Racialism*, 19–20.

<sup>888</sup> Everatt, *The Origins of Non-Racialism*, 34.

<sup>889</sup> UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information, Subject File 158 (Part 1), War Veterans Torch Commando, ‘A Few Remarks of Problems at Present Facing the WVAC’.

<sup>890</sup> Isacowitz, *Telling People What They Do Not Want to Hear*, 237.

<sup>891</sup> Isacowitz, 237.

<sup>892</sup> Lovell, *For the Love of Justice*, 134.

<sup>893</sup> Horn, *In Enemy Hands*, 245–246.

<sup>894</sup> White, ‘The Role of the Springbok Legion in the Communist Party of South Africa’s Common Front Strategy’, 100.

post-war leadership confirmed that communists had infiltrated the SL.<sup>895</sup> Despite the radical, non-racial nature of the SL and the steady increase in the CPSA's influence, the SL under the leadership of Isacowitz, tread an uncertain path between communism and partisan politics in the build-up to the 1948 elections.<sup>896</sup>

In the 1948 elections, the SL chose to play a supportive role, rather than push for a radical agenda for the establishment of a Soldiers' Party. In the build-up to the 1948 elections, the SL argued that the UP-LP alliance was the preferred vehicle to defeat the Nationalists.<sup>897</sup> At the SL's Special National Conference in September 1947, the SL wed the NPs previous association with Fascism, to race relations and called for a united front in the elections:

We are convinced that a victory for the HNP and its associated groups in the forthcoming General Election would be against the national interest, and would be a set-back to the principle for which the LEGION stands. We are not prepared to forget or to forgive the attitude which the HNP followed during the war.... We regard its policy of national isolation and racial antagonism and its undemocratic tendencies to be disastrous for the future of our country... We therefore call on the United Party, the Labour Party, and all progressive bodies and individuals to arrange a common front in the face of this reactionary challenge, and to fight the General Election on an organised, united basis.<sup>898</sup>

Based on this call, the SL encouraged its members to "join and work in the political party of their choice"<sup>899</sup> and provided both parties with a disciplined workforce against the NP.<sup>900</sup> The SL had also hoped that election work would revitalise its flagging membership.<sup>901</sup> Despite coming under increased CPSA control and experiencing dwindling membership, the SL still believed that it could marshal ex-servicemen against the NP in the elections.

### 4.3 THE 1948 ELECTIONS

#### 4.3.1 The impact of the 1948 general election on ex-servicemen

The defeat of the centralist UP in the 1948 general election was met with shock and disbelief by many ex-servicemen. Len Lee-Warden was at a theatre the night of the NP victory:

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<sup>895</sup> Lazerson, *Against the Tide*, 57.

<sup>896</sup> White, 'The Role of the Springbok Legion in the Communist Party of South Africa's Common Front Strategy, 100; Wits Historical Papers, A617, Springbok Legion, 'Minutes of a Meeting of the National Executive Committee Held at Main House, Main Street, Johannesburg on Saturday 3rd February 1945, 2.30. p.m.'.

<sup>897</sup> White, 'The South African Parliamentary Opposition, 1948-1953', 27; Roos, *Ordinary Springboks*, 135.

<sup>898</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A617, Springbok Legion, 'Statement of Policy with Regards to the Forthcoming General Election'.

<sup>899</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A617, Springbok Legion, 'Special National Executive Conference Held at Progress Buildings, Commissioner Street, Johannesburg on Sunday, 14th December 1947'.

<sup>900</sup> White, 'The Role of the Springbok Legion in the Communist Party of South Africa's Common Front Strategy, 1941-1950', 104.

<sup>901</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A617, Springbok Legion, 'Special National Executive Conference Held at Progress Buildings, Commissioner Street, Johannesburg on Sunday, 14th December 1947'.

One evening in 1948 whilst watching a film at a local cinema we were shocked to read a flash announcement that interrupted the picture to inform us that General Smuts had been defeated at the polls and that the Nationalists were in power...<sup>902</sup>

The failure of the efforts made by these men whether members of the CPSA, SL, the UP or LP to fight the NP, amplified these feelings of frustration and defeat. Additionally, the defeat at the polls of their military Commander-in-Chief, Smuts, added another layer of disillusionment.

Further disbelief surfaced amongst ex-servicemen. They had enlisted to fight against German and Italian fascism on foreign soil. They won that war. However, a similar war on the home front was lost. They had failed in their military duty on the political battlefield to defeat the fascist tinged-NP. As Susser noted, "The years spent at war against Nazism and Fascism sharpened the obligation to oppose the ...[NP]." In 1948, the victory of their ideological imitators was all the more bitter.<sup>903</sup>

The events of 1948 shocked many ex-servicemen, who had been politically inactive after the war, into political action. As Peter Brown explained, "it was the ongoing impact of Nationalist rhetoric and the beginnings of them putting into effect their policies that provided us with the push to start wondering what we should be doing".<sup>904</sup> Schwarz, similarly recounted that:

... when the Nationalist Party won the general elections in 1948, I decided that I thought that I should go into politics. I was then a student. I was a [*sic.*] ex-serviceman. I had served in the South African Airforce, and I regarded the Nationalist Party as being a party that had been opposed to the war effort, and I therefore regarded them as being opposed to my ideology on that very simplistic basis in 1948 when I was a student.<sup>905</sup>

Days after the election defeat, Eglin approached the MP for Pinelands, RJ du Toit, and told him that "I wanted to start working to get rid of the Nats. I joined the United Party; I was put on the committee in Pinelands."<sup>906</sup> Others only joined this struggle after the NP began imposing its policies. As Kosie Marais explained, it was the association of NP policies with that of Adolf Hitler's that motivated him to enter politics in 1953:<sup>907</sup>

...the actions of the current *Broederbond* government has convinced me that they are dragging the country down the same path as Hitler did with Germany, and therefore I am making myself available as the UP candidate for the George constituency.<sup>908</sup>

Similarly, Gideon Jacobs evoked Second World War Nazism to explain his entry into politics in 1960, indicating the tenacity of both the anti-fascist rhetoric and the taint of Nazism on the NP:

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<sup>902</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2521 aa, David Everatt Papers, 'Memoirs Len Lee-Warden', 23.

<sup>903</sup> Susser, 'A Personal History: Social Medicine in a South African Setting, 1952–5. Part 2', 665.

<sup>904</sup> APC, OHP, 'Interview with Dr Peter Brown conducted by Prof Norman Bromberger'.

<sup>905</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2242, Hackland, 'Interview with Harry Schwarz by B Hackland'.

<sup>906</sup> Eglin, *Crossing the Borders of Power*, 42.

<sup>907</sup> Authors own translation. Original quote: "...die optrede van die huidige Broederbond regering het my oortuig dat hulle besig is om ons land mee te sleep op die weg van Hitler se Duitsland, en derhalwe stel ek my verkiesbaar as die Verenigde Party kandidaat vir George Kiesafdeling".

<sup>908</sup> Venter, 'Majoor JP Marais : Die Skepper van Klipdrif Brandewyn', 121.

How often did not in postwar Germany [*sic.*] hear children ask their parents: 'What did you do to stop the Hitler regime?' We thought our children would one day ask us a similar question. We wanted to be in a position to give a positive reply.<sup>909</sup>

The NP's dalliance with Fascism before and during the war, coupled with the vigour of their post-war rhetoric, evoked strong memories among many ex-servicemen. The forebodings that the NP government would plunge South Africa into a fascist dystopia, similar to what Nazism did in Germany, animated several ex-servicemen into political action. Some continued to politically oppose the NP by supporting the Legion while others formally joined political parties, and some took the fight to Parliament as MPs.

#### 4.3.2 Ex-servicemen in the 10th Parliament (1948-1953)

The 1948 election's impact on ex-servicemen extended beyond attitudes and motivations to enter the sphere of political activism. The election results also ushered in a shuffling of parliamentary seats. Table 4.3 shows the ex-servicemen that became MPs in the 10<sup>th</sup> Parliament. The 1948 General Election delivered 11 ex-servicemen to Parliament as opposition MPs, six of whom retained their seats. Of the six MPs that retained their seats, three, Henry Gluckman, the former Minister of Health, Harold Tothill and Bernard Freidman, served in the SAMC in South Africa while retaining their seats in Parliament. Two, Frank Waring and James Hamilton-Russell, used their early discharge from the UDF to contest the 1943 elections. Albert Robinson secured his parliamentary seat by winning the 1947 Langlaagte by-election. Additionally, in 1950 Rupert Pilkington-Jordan (UP), Phillip Moore (UP) and Leo Lovell (LP) won by-elections, and in 1951 Robert Badenhorst-Durrant (UP) increased ex-servicemen representation in Parliament further.<sup>910</sup> Shared war experience resulted in the raw ex-servicemen MPs (Graaff, Robinson, Harry Oppenheimer and Thomas Gray-Hughes) drifting together, and they soon met for weekly lunch meetings to discuss political problems.<sup>911</sup> Thus, a shared ex-serviceman identity smoothed the integration of ex-servicemen into parliamentary politics.

In terms of military service, Table 4.3 indicates the rank and wartime experience of the MPs in the selected group. Most of the ex-servicemen MPs shared a similar experience of the war with eight recipients of the Africa Star, and only one Italy Star. Four senior officers, Colonel Pilkington-Jordaan, Deputy Adjutant General of the UDF, Colonel Gluckman, Minister of Health, Major Moore, and Major Freidman, did not deploy outside of South Africa. Wartime MP's include, Tothill, Gluckman, Waring, Albert Robinson, Hamilton-Russel and Friedman. These men, with five senior officers and nine junior officers in their ranks, used their social capital accrued during the war to further enhance their political careers. Thomas Gray-Hughes was the single senior NCO.

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<sup>909</sup> Jacobs, *Beckoning Horizons*, 162.

<sup>910</sup> *South African Who's Who 1948-1977*, (Port Elizabeth: Ken Donaldson (Pty) Ltd, 1948-1977).

<sup>911</sup> Graaff, *Div Looks Back*, 126.

**Table 4.3: Ranks of MPs in the 10<sup>th</sup> Parliament 1948-1953 (n=153)<sup>912</sup>**

Rank at Discharge	Africa Star	Italy Star	POW	Wartime MP	Home Defence	MP per Rank
Colonel	-	-	-	1	2	2
Lieutenant Colonel	1	-	-	-	-	1
Major	-	-	-	1	2	2
Captain	3	1	1	1	-	5
Lieutenant	2	-	-	3	-	3
Sergeant	1	-	1	-	-	1
Unknown	1	-	-	-	-	1

The UP used the ex-servicemen in Parliament to launch a broadside attack on the NP on defence issues. Ex-servicemen such as Graaff, Moore, Badenhorst-Durrant, Pilkington-Jordaan and Howard Henwood badgered the Minister of Defence with pointed parliamentary questions based on their military knowledge and contacts.<sup>913</sup> For instance, in September 1949, Oppenheimer observed that Erasmus was more concerned about removing the 'Red Tab' from the Permanent Force uniform than the defence implications of the Soviet Union acquiring an atomic bomb.<sup>914</sup> The Active Citizen Force (ACF) units resisted the removal of this symbolic reference of their involvement in the war, and 22 ACF regiments were still wearing it as late as 1952.<sup>915</sup> The LP MP, Lovell, as a member of the SL National Executive Committee (NEC), used his time in Parliament to champion for Coloured rights when the NP attempted to disenfranchise the Coloured voters.<sup>916</sup> The presence of ex-servicemen in Parliament exposed the NP's and Erasmus', as Minister of Defence, ignorance of military matters. The NP's obliviousness of military niceties would later contribute to the mobilisation of the ex-servicemen in opposition to NP actions.

#### 4.4 THE RISE AND FALL OF VETERAN POLITICS 1948-1953

Soon after winning the 1948 elections, the NP started implementing changes and policies. As Lee-Warden noted, the UP defeat would result in the reversal of many of the UP's progressive wartime reforms; "We did not have to wait long before the government made known its intentions to halt the many social changes that the Smuts government had planned to institute and indeed in many cases to reverse the process."<sup>917</sup>

The NP openly opposed the liberal reforms that had been implemented by the Smuts government and set about undoing any integration of both White society and South African society at large. The association of the NP undoing the work of Smuts, their former general during the war, thus added a

<sup>912</sup> *South African Who's Who 1948-1977*; DOD Archive, PA. The MP's per rank do not total up, as they may have served in more than one campaign.

<sup>913</sup> Boulter, 'FC Erasmus and the Politics of South African Defence 1948-1959', 224.

<sup>914</sup> Boulter, 219; The Red Tab was replaced by SA on PF uniforms on 1 December 1949.

<sup>915</sup> Boulter, 92.

<sup>916</sup> Lovell, *For the Love of Justice*, 121-22.

<sup>917</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2521 aa, David Everatt Papers, 'Memoirs Len Lee-Warden', 23.



further blow to the ex-servicemen. Also, in June 1948, the NP confirmed ex-servicemen's perception that the Nationalists held Nazi sympathies when they released Robey Leibbrandt and other *Ossewabrandwag* (OB) prisoners. The rehabilitation of Liebbrandt prompted the creation of numerous ex-servicemen committees which co-operated with the UP and LP to organise protest meetings in Johannesburg and Durban in June 1948.<sup>918</sup>

Further legislative reforms by the NP stimulated substantial debate and action among ex-servicemen. On 10 June 1948, Eben Dönges, the Minister of Justice, provided one of the first indicators of the racist dystopia the NP were advocating when he moved to repeal part II of the 1946 Asiatic Land Tenure and Representation Act.<sup>919</sup> Shortly afterwards, on 19 August 1948, the defence community was directly affected when Erasmus announced the disbanding of the Native Military Corps and the Cape Corps.<sup>920</sup> The disarming and exclusion of Blacks from the defence establishment was the forerunner of the exclusion of Blacks from the broader political sphere.

To further aggrieve serving military personnel, Erasmus appointed Colonel Rudolph Hiemstra as his military advisor within weeks of the 1948 elections. Hiemstra had refused to take the Red Oath and now returned to the UDF at an elevated rank.<sup>921</sup> Other non-oath takers, such as Major JSJ van der Merwe, were also rehabilitated by Erasmus to the scorn of ex-servicemen. Ex-servicemen saw these promotions and reforms as a slight to their war service, which resulted in a constant stream of parliamentary questions demanding detailed information on the running of the UDF.<sup>922</sup> Erasmus's efforts to side-line war veterans in the UDF and erase the memory of the war further pushed many ex-servicemen into opposition politics.

Alongside defence reforms and repressive legislation, the NP continued to violently disrupt opposition political meetings beyond the 1948 elections. During the by-elections, UP and LP politicians depended on ex-servicemen for both political canvassing and the physical protection on the hustings, thereby drawing the ex-servicemen into a closer relationship with the opposition alliance. The SL attempted to provide electoral support in the 1949 by-elections of Mayfair and Vereeniging.<sup>923</sup> When NP supporters threatened to violently disrupt UP meetings in the Newlands by-elections in 1950-51, a former POW, Colonel Boardman, suggested to Louis Kane-Berman to rally ex-servicemen to protect the UP speaker, Blaar Coetzee. A group of 300 ex-servicemen and

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<sup>918</sup> White, 'The South African Parliamentary Opposition, 1948-1953', 74, 257.

<sup>919</sup> White, 85.

<sup>920</sup> Boulter, 'FC Erasmus and the Politics of South African Defence 1948-1959', 102.

<sup>921</sup> Boulter, 48.

<sup>922</sup> DOD Archive, Kommandant-Generaal/ Group 5/ 203, Questions in Parliament; Kommandant-Generaal/ Group 5/ 204, Questions in Parliament.

<sup>923</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A617, Springbok Legion, 'Minutes of a Meeting of the Action Committee Held at Main House Johannesburg on Thursday May 19th 1949'.

Wits Students rallied to the call. It was not long before the local NP supporters stormed their positions.<sup>924</sup>

In Parliament, a dislocated UP battled to deliver active opposition to the NP. The comprehensiveness of the defeat in the rural constituencies in the Transvaal had fixated the UP on winning back the *platteland* vote, which required appealing to the conservative Afrikaner voter.<sup>925</sup> In 1948, Jan Hofmeyr lamented:

Must we try to compete with the Nats. in the appeal to colour prejudice? If so, can we hope to defeat them? Or else must we come out boldly with a liberal policy? If so, does that not mean giving up the hope of winning back the Platteland?<sup>926</sup>

Many of the politically aware ex-servicemen also openly criticised the UP for neglecting the more liberal urban constituencies in favour of the more conservative rural voters. Marquard had already warned in 1946, that “the United Party is frightening off its possible friends by vainly trying to attract its known enemies”.<sup>927</sup> Kane-Berman lamented that “[t]he tragedy of the UP was that in its concern to woo the platteland it was prepared to sacrifice principle”.<sup>928</sup> The UP, in opposition, continued on the road of compromise, allowing the NP to dictate the political discourse.

The death of Hofmeyr in 1948 left the already dislocated UP to be rudderless. The SL claimed that the UP had “apparently decided that the reactionary policies of the Nats, were what the people wanted. Since they had no clearly defined political convictions, it was not difficult to forsake the ideas and memory of Hofmeyr and ape the Nats.”<sup>929</sup> Thus the 1948 elections, despite animating ex-servicemen against the NP, had left the UP in disarray.

Eglin, who joined the UP in 1948 had experienced the disarray in the UP, “[m]orale was low; organisation pathetic; policy and ideology were confused and ambivalent. In this situation, the old-guard leadership looked for someone other than themselves to blame.”<sup>930</sup> Vause Raw, an ex-serviceman who had become a UP organiser in 1949, attributed this staleness of the UP ideas as a consequence of the war, which robbed the UP of young politicians:

... after the war we had become a very old party. All of us who fought in the war had been out of politics for ten, twelve, fifteen years, or hadn't come into it [in a way] we normally would, so the party had become an old party, because of the lack of [experience among the younger politicians who had fought in], the war... ... A few came in forty-eight, like Div Graaff, and Albert Robertson and Harry Oppenheimer.<sup>931</sup>

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<sup>924</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2077, Kane-Berman, ‘The Torch Commando. Its Beginning and End’, 2.

<sup>925</sup> White, ‘The South African Parliamentary Opposition, 1948-1953’, 57.

<sup>926</sup> White, 57.

<sup>927</sup> Everatt, *The Origins of Non-Racialism*, 29.

<sup>928</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2077, Kane-Berman, ‘The Torch Commando. Its Beginning and End’, 15.

<sup>929</sup> ‘This Does Not Fool Us... ...Nor Does This’, *Fighting Talk* (January 1950).

<sup>930</sup> Eglin, *Crossing the Borders of Power*, 44.

<sup>931</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2242 Hackland, ‘Interview with Vause Raw by B Hackland’.

Thus, the ex-servicemen, who had joined the UP, found a party cobbled together by pre-war alliances and loyalties, and in need of revitalisation and re-organisation.

Apart from establishing a small caucus in Parliament, ex-servicemen thus slowly started to assume key positions in the UP. Oppenheimer and Graaff were almost immediately incorporated into the UP committees for finance and re-organisation respectively.<sup>932</sup> By 1949 Bill Horak had been appointed the Administrative Secretary and the Secretary of the Division of Organisation.<sup>933</sup> By 1950, Robinson chaired the Division of Fund Raising, and Graaff held the chair of the Division of Organisation. Graaff also served as the Chair of the Cape Province and was supported by John Bowring as the Secretary of the Cape Peninsula.<sup>934</sup> Clapham, had become the technical director in the UP Information Division after his resignation from the Legion.<sup>935</sup> Thus, these ex-servicemen had carved out an enclave within the UP administration.

After Smuts's withdrawal from party leadership in 1950, the subsequent contest for the leadership of the UP was resolved without much conviction in favour of Kosie Strauss, as Graaff chose to decline the nomination.<sup>936</sup> Although Graaff believed his intentions were for the best, he had inadvertently weakened Strauss' hand and had revealed the conservative faction in the party.<sup>937</sup> Clifford Miles-Warren, a UP MP, believed that the nature of the leadership contest marked the start of the end of the UP as he stated that "Strauss was elected leader but fifteen men had become marked men for daring to vote against his appointment. That fatal day was the start of the dissension within the party."<sup>938</sup> Graaff's deference of Strauss' ascent to the leadership of the UP accentuated the divisions and intrigues between the various constituent factions instead of revitalising the party.

Arthur Barlow, a maverick politician and father-in-law of Waring, the ex-servicemen who later became the Minister of Sport in the NP government in 1962, believed Strauss had given the liberal wing of the UP more latitude than that which Smuts would have allowed. This in his opinion had made the liberals in the party more outspoken.<sup>939</sup> In 1949, the conservatives, which included Barlow, and Waring, attempted to counter the leftward drift in the UP by consulting with DF Malan. The consultations were over the NP's emerging plans to remove the Coloureds from the common voter's roll, which could be seen as in defiance of Strauss. Graaff, along with Harry Lawrence and Gray-Hughes represented the UP on the Select Committee on the Cape Coloured Vote. On Strauss' instruction, they discretely lobbied the leader of the Afrikaner Party, Klasie Havenga, on the pretext

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<sup>932</sup> White, 'The South African Parliamentary Opposition, 1948-1953', 107.

<sup>933</sup> White, 163.

<sup>934</sup> UNISA-UP Archive, Central Head Office, Subject File 61, 62 (part 1), Congress 1952, 'Eighth Union Congress United Party 19-20 November 1952'; White, 'The South African Parliamentary Opposition, 1948-1953', 239.

<sup>935</sup> White, 264.

<sup>936</sup> White, 186.

<sup>937</sup> Mouton, 'A Decent Man , But Not Very Popular', 5.

<sup>938</sup> White, 'The South African Parliamentary Opposition, 1948-1953', 187.

<sup>939</sup> Barlow, *That We May Tread Safely*, 94.

of discussing Friesland cattle.<sup>940</sup> The Conservative UP MPs' discussions with DF Malan led to Waring being broadly ostracised among the liberal camp with Jan Steytler referring to him as "a pathetic little chap".<sup>941</sup> Smuts's withdrawal from the UP leadership and death in 1951 left Strauss with the growing challenge of reconciling the contradictions within the UP.

The failure of the UP to present a unified front against the NP undermined their ability to oppose repressive legislation in Parliament.<sup>942</sup> The ineffective UP, divided on how to reform to appeal to voters in by-elections led to a growth in White extra-parliamentary political activities.<sup>943</sup> The UP's vulnerability opened the door for the ex-servicemen under consideration to shore up the UP in opposition to the rising Nationalist star.

#### 4.4.1 The war veterans action committee/Torch commando

The UP's lacklustre and often divided parliamentary opposition to the NP opened the door for the SL to rally ex-servicemen against the NP. By October 1949, the SL had identified the impending removal of the Cape Coloured voters from the common voter's roll, as a potential catalyst for political agitation against the NP. Towards the end of 1949, the Legion canvassed prominent stakeholders in Johannesburg for support.<sup>944</sup> Both Smuts and Oppenheimer had shown interest in the SL's idea. Oppenheimer had been "well disposed to the Legion and had promised to assist ..."<sup>945</sup> Furthermore, Smuts's military status, ex-servicemen's loyalty to him and his tacit support for the SL was used by legionnaires after Smut's demise to promote the SL's aims and garner further support. This can be seen for instance in the chairman's report to the SL's 9<sup>th</sup> Annual National Conference in 1952:

General Smuts agreed with us ...that the steps taken by the Nationalists to entrench themselves would one day call for a mighty extra-parliamentary struggle, ... in order to crystallise the demand for a general election. General Smuts also agreed with us that the attempt to remove the Coloured voters from the common roll would be the most suitable issue for a wide-scale mobilisation of the opposition.<sup>946</sup>

However, when DF Malan demurred from introducing legislation to address the Coloured vote in the 1950 parliamentary sitting,<sup>947</sup> the idea, without a trigger, was shelved.

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<sup>940</sup> Graaff, *Div Looks Back*, 133.

<sup>941</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2242, Hackland, 'Interview with Dr Jan Steytler by B Hackland'.

<sup>942</sup> The Suppression of Communism Act of June 1950, The Group Areas Act of July 1950, The Population Registration Act of July 1950, and The Immorality Amendment Act of July 1950.

<sup>943</sup> Eglin, *Crossing the Borders of Power*, 45.

<sup>944</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A617, Springbok Legion, 'Minutes of a Meeting of the Action Committee Held on Wednesday October 19th 1949'.

<sup>945</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A617, Springbok Legion, 'Minutes of the Action Committee Meeting Held on Friday 12th August 1949, at Main House 196 Main Street, Johannesburg'.

<sup>946</sup> Lazerson, *Against the Tide*, 61.

<sup>947</sup> Krugër *The Making of a Nation*, 252.

In anticipation for the 1951 parliamentary session, the SL resurrected the idea and prepared its members to oppose the NP on the Coloured Franchise issue. In the December 1950 *Fighting Talk*, the SL's mouthpiece warned its readers:

The struggle will begin early in the year, when the Coloured vote legislation is introduced in Parliament. The government will attempt to prevent criticism and free speech generally, in and outside Parliament, on this vital question. The opposition will be tested inside Parliament; the South African public will be tested outside Parliament.<sup>948</sup>

Legionnaires in rural towns must be prepared to take the initiative in forming an ad hoc committee of responsible people to run the campaign in their town or village.<sup>949</sup>

In February 1951, the Separate Representation of Voters Bill was published for discussion in Parliament. In response, legionnaires Cecil Williams and Hodgson met with ex-legionnaire Clapham in April 1951 to discuss enlisting ex-servicemen to oppose the disenfranchisement of the Coloured community.<sup>950</sup> Williams also discussed the idea with the leader of the UP, Strauss, in Cape Town on 12 April 1951.<sup>951</sup> The SL offered the UP access to the networks of ex-servicemen that the SL had already established during the 1948 National Elections and 1949 Provincial Elections.<sup>952</sup> Thus, the SL hoped to revitalise the parliamentary opposition to the NP through former means.

The SL was not alone in appealing to the ex-serviceman community. The UP organised its ex-serviceman membership using a structure known as "the fives",<sup>953</sup> and Clapham, at the time of his meeting with Williams and Hodgson, had been organising a UP protest meeting planned for 23 April 1951.<sup>954</sup> Apart from the UP and the SL, another ad hoc committee of prominent ex-servicemen, which included Brigadier Fritz Adler, Ralph Parrott, Leo Kowarsky, John Wilson, Charles Bekker and Isacowitz, had been formed in Johannesburg and had lobbied Boardman and Kane-Berman to join their initiative to push for a mass meeting at the Johannesburg City Hall on 4 May 1951. The meeting was to protest the NP's attempts to 'violate the spirit of the constitution'.<sup>955</sup> Clapham, seeing the usefulness of coordinating these initiatives, claims to have brought these groups together,<sup>956</sup> and offered the UPs financial and organisational support.<sup>957</sup> The ensuing War Veterans Action Committee

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<sup>948</sup> 'Parliamentary Prospects 1951', *Fighting Talk* (December 1950), 5.

<sup>949</sup> 'The Franchise Is Your Campaign', *Fighting Talk* (December 1950), 5.

<sup>950</sup> Fridjhon, 'The Torch Command & The Politics of White Opposition', 3.

<sup>951</sup> White, 'The South African Parliamentary Opposition, 1948-1953', 262.

<sup>952</sup> White, 'The Role of the Springbok Legion in the Communist Party of South Africa's Common Front Strategy, 1941-1950', 105.

<sup>953</sup> White, 'The South African Parliamentary Opposition, 1948-1953', 263; UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information, Subject File 158 (Part 1), War Veterans Torch Commando, 'Letter from AG Malan to H F Oppenheimer Dated 12 May 1951'.

<sup>954</sup> Fridjhon, 'The Torch Command & The Politics of White Opposition', 3.

<sup>955</sup> Wits Historical Papers A2077, Kane Berman, 'The Torch Commando. Its Beginning and End', 2; Wits Historical Papers, A2521 aa, David Everatt Papers; 'Memoirs Len Lee-Warden'.

<sup>956</sup> Roos, *Ordinary Springboks*, 135; Fridjhon, 'The Torch Command & The Politics of White Opposition', 4.

<sup>957</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2521 aa, David Everatt Papers; 'Memoirs Len Lee-Warden', 42-43; White, 'The South African Parliamentary Opposition, 1948-1953', 264.

(WVAC), the precursor to the Torch,<sup>958</sup> consolidated the planning for the protest meeting.<sup>959</sup> On 4 May 1951, the planned mass protest meeting was held in Johannesburg and drew more crowds than expected, with an estimated turnout of 20 000 spectators and 4 000 participants in the accompanying march past, which included contingents of ex-servicemen and women, university students and a column of Coloured ex-servicemen.<sup>960</sup> On the same day, ex-servicemen held a similar protest in Port Elizabeth.<sup>961</sup>

At the mass meeting on 4 May 1951, the principal speaker Group Captain (RAF) Sailor Malan<sup>962</sup> evoked the memory of the war to substantiate the need for action to protect the Coloured Franchise:

The strength of this gathering is evidence that the men and women who fought in the war for freedom still cherish what they fought for. We are determined not to be denied the fruits of that victory. It is good to see this support in protest against the rape of the Constitution and the attack on our rights and liberties as free men. In Abyssinia, at Alamein and a score of bloody campaigns we won the right to a voice in our country's affairs. And we are determined that our voice shall not only be heard but that it shall also be heeded. This bill has been foisted on us in the so-called name of the people - the broad will of the people. We do not like this Bill, and we are the people.<sup>963</sup>

Although the meeting gave voice to the ex-servicemen's growing political frustrations, it also articulated these emotions in terms of protecting the constitution, thereby committing the ex-servicemen to protect the Coloured franchise.

#### 4.4.2 Steel commando

Flushed with the success of the 4 May 1951 meeting, and buoyed by the support of ex-servicemen, the WVAC developed Isacowitz's idea of petitioning Parliament directly on the constitutionality of the NP's actions and to force the government's hand for early elections.<sup>964</sup> In further meetings held between 8 and 12 May 1951,<sup>965</sup> the WVAC decided that:

... a mass demonstration should be held in Cape Town where a petition in opposition to the proposed legislation was to be presented to Parliament. Committees of ex-servicemen were hastily convened in all the main towns. It was decided that vehicle convoys from Durban, Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth and Bloemfontein should converge at the Marine Parade Cape Town on 21<sup>st</sup> May 1951.<sup>966</sup>

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<sup>958</sup> It is difficult to determine when the WVAC became the Torch considering the inconsistencies in both archival and secondary sources. Since most authors (Roos, Fridjhon and Kane-Berman) do not clearly differentiate between the two organisations, the National Conference on 26 June 1951 is used as the distinction for the purposes of this thesis. The abbreviation WVAC/Torch is used to indicate that in at least the mind of Sailor Malan *et al* the Torch was the WVAC.

<sup>959</sup> White, 262.

<sup>960</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2521 aa, David Everatt Papers; 'Memoirs Len Lee-Warden', 41.

<sup>961</sup> 'Will You Carry a Torch....?', *Fighting Talk* (May 1951).

<sup>962</sup> Wits Historical Papers A2077, Kane-Berman, 'The Torch Commando. Its Beginning and End', 3.

<sup>963</sup> Walker, *Sailor Malan. A Biography*, 163–64.

<sup>964</sup> J Robertson, *Liberalism in South Africa 1948-1963* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 60.

<sup>965</sup> Fridjhon, 'The Torch Command & The Politics of White Opposition', 5.

<sup>966</sup> Wits Historical Papers A2077, Kane-Berman, 'The Torch Commando. Its Beginning and End', 4.



The planned campaign was called the Steel Commando. Ex-servicemen in Cape Town quickly responded to the momentum of the Transvaal WVAC. Gerald Gordon, a lawyer and former AES information officer, quickly formed a Cape Town branch on 15 May 1951, with Lee-Warden as organising secretary.<sup>967</sup> Lee-Warden immediately took his annual leave to devote himself to the organisation of the march on Parliament. The UP in the Cape followed on Clapham's promise of assistance when Hamilton-Russel, an ex-serviceman MP in the UP, provided the use of his office to the new-born Cape Branch.<sup>968</sup> The WVAC sent Jacques Lorraine and Parrott to Cape Town to assist Lee-Warden and his committee with the preparations for the march. Williams, who was appointed the Adjutant of the Steel Commando,<sup>969</sup> also kept Strauss informed of the developments.<sup>970</sup> The Steel Commando campaign brought the WVAC, the UP and the SL together in close co-operation. The SL provided full-time organisers to run the logistics of the operation, and Clapham in the UP supplied vital information for the operation.<sup>971</sup> During the build-up and execution of the Steel Commando campaign in May 1951, about a third of the WVAC executive had affiliations with the SL.<sup>972</sup> As with any improvised and quickly formed initiative, the Steel Commando campaign represented a broad front of opposition to the NP. In the rank and file, many had wanted to storm Parliament to physically 'throw out the nats.' It seems that Isacowitz had sounded such an idea with John Lang.<sup>973</sup> On the other extreme, others argued over the legalities of marching up a one-way street.<sup>974</sup> Even the original idea to force an early election had become diluted when Graaff and Oppenheimer persuaded the organisers that the UP was not ready to capitalise on this demand.<sup>975</sup> Although the March to Parliament on 28 May 1951 drew ex-servicemen from across the country and the political spectrum into one movement, a singular act of ill-discipline resulted in the damage to the NG Church near Parliament. The NP pounced on this incident to accuse the WVAC of being a military threat and used the SL's involvement to claim that the SL was the real organiser and thus the WVAC a communist front, an accusation that would later be used by the liberals in the WVAC against the SL.<sup>976</sup>

The Steel Commando's march on Parliament and the lingering possibility of a military insurrection, however, had unsettled the NP, with Prime Minister DF Malan warning later that year:

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<sup>967</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2521 aa, David Everatt Papers; 'Memoirs Len Lee-Warden', 42–43.

<sup>968</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2521 aa, David Everatt Papers; 'Memoirs Len Lee-Warden', 44.

<sup>969</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2521 aa, David Everatt Papers; 'Memoirs Len Lee-Warden', 48; Fridjhon, 'The Torch Command & The Politics of White Opposition', 6.

<sup>970</sup> White, 'The South African Parliamentary Opposition, 1948-1953', 263.

<sup>971</sup> White, 264.

<sup>972</sup> Roos, *Ordinary Springboks*, 136.

<sup>973</sup> Fridjhon, 'The Torch Command & The Politics of White Opposition', 8; White, 'The South African Parliamentary Opposition, 1948-1953', 267.

<sup>974</sup> Robertson, *Liberalism in South Africa 1948-1963*, 60.

<sup>975</sup> White, 'The South African Parliamentary Opposition, 1948-1953', 265; Fridjhon, 'The Torch Command & The Politics of White Opposition', 7.

<sup>976</sup> Walker, *Sailor Malan. A Biography*, 164.

People contend that the Torch Commando [successor of the WVAC] will go a little way and then vanish. That is not my view. The Torch Commando is to be taken seriously because it had a military or semi-military character. Private Armies of that nature cannot be tolerated...If they make their appearance at Nationalist Party meetings as they have begun to do, you can well understand that there will be a reaction on the part of Nationalists ...<sup>977</sup>

Despite the Torch Commando's (the Torch) dismissal of DF Malan's concerns, Sailor Malan had initially toyed with the possibility of establishing "mobile, disciplined units" but was careful to emphasise that the Torch was "militant not military".<sup>978</sup> Furthermore, some of the WVAC members who later become part of the Torch's leadership had previously in 1948 clandestinely recruited and trained military forces, albeit for a different purpose.

In 1948, Lovell, Isacowitz, Korwarsky and Gordon had been at the forefront of the South African League for Haganah's efforts to recruit and train South African Jewish volunteers to fight in the Israeli War of Independence. Korwarsky had established a Zionist military training camp on the Bacher's farm in Krugersdorp. Gordon had done the same at Wemershoek in the Cape. Korwarsky, had also worked with his cousin Cecil Margo, a South African fighter ace who played a prominent role in the establishment of the Israeli Air Force, to train pilots for Israel at Palmietfontein near Germiston.<sup>979</sup> However, when Sailor Malan's secret overtures to Major Keith Coster<sup>980</sup> for possible access to the UDF ammunition dump at Ganspan were rebutted by Coster, Malan quickly dropped the idea of armed insurrection.<sup>981</sup> Thus although the WVAC/Torch had the potential for armed insurrection, the leadership saw the wisdom of limiting themselves to using only constitutional means to protect the constitution.

The urgency and speed of events, from the forming of the WVAC in April 1951, the organisation of the Steel Commando in May 1951, and the establishment of the War Veteran's Torch Commando (later known as the Torch) in June 1951, opened the doors of the movement to competing interest groups. The WVAC-Torch's origins had thus left the movement vulnerable to being subverted for short-term partisan objectives. The next sections explore the constituent parts' contest for influence over the Torch.

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<sup>977</sup> Walker, *Sailor Malan. A Biography*, 168.

<sup>978</sup> Walker, *Sailor Malan. A Biography*, 168; UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information, Subject File 158 (Part 2) War Veterans Torch Commando, 'War Veterans Organisation: Paper Submitted by Group Captain AG Malan Dated 25 June 1951', 7.

<sup>979</sup> H Katzew, *South Africa's 800: The Story of South African Volunteers in Israel's War of Birth* (Ra'anana: South African Zionist Federation, 2002), 62-63; P Gillon, *Seventy Years of Southern African Aliyah, A story of Achievement* (Israel: Adar Publishing, 1992), 37; Isacowitz *Telling People What They Do Not Want to Hear*, 271.

<sup>980</sup> Maj Coster, resigned from the UDF and accepted a commission in the Rhodesian Armed Forces.

<sup>981</sup> Boulter, 'FC Erasmus and the Politics of South African Defence 1948-1959', 242.

#### 4.4.3 Early contest for control of the war veterans' action committee – Torch commando

Ex-servicemen quickly cobbled the WVAC together in 1951 to provide a national focal point for the ever-increasing number of protest meetings around the country against the NP's increasingly suppressive behaviour. After the mass response to the Steel Commando in May 1951, the WVAC convened a national conference at the Langham Hotel in Johannesburg on 28 June 1951, where the WVAC reconstituted itself as the War Veterans Torch Commando.<sup>982</sup> The Torch had appealed to many groupings that wished to re-invigorate White politics after the 1948 elections. The movement's mass appeal reflected the rich interconnectivity of veteran politics and the social networks of ex-servicemen which meant that no single political entity was solely responsible for the Torch's creation. Table 4.4 shows the rich interconnectivity that the leading Torchmen (Members of the Torch) had with the various political formations such as the SL, the UP and LP, and highlights the fault-lines in the WVAC-Torch that are discussed in the following section.

**Table 4.4: Rank grouping and political affiliation of the torch leadership cadre within the sample group (n=153)<sup>983</sup>**

Rank	Torchmen	UP members	LP Members	Springbok Legionnaires
General Officers	6	3	-	-
Senior Officers	14	7	-	-
Junior Officers	27	11	-	6
WO and Senior NCO	3	-	-	1
Junior NCO and Pte	11	1	2	3
Unknown	2	-	-	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>11</b>

The overlapping membership and loyalties of the leadership cadre of the WVAC-Torch led to the impression that origins of the Torch could be "attributed, to UP initiative, to the Springbok Legion, or to a group of leading English-speaking businessmen spearheaded by Anglo-American's Harry Oppenheimer".<sup>984</sup> The following discussion investigates this belief further.

<sup>982</sup> Roos, *Ordinary Springboks*, 148; Wits Historical Papers A2077, Kane-Berman, 'The Torch Commando. Its Beginning and End', 5.

<sup>983</sup> Table created by Author from: *Who is Who in Southern Africa 1948-1977*; UNISA-UP Archive, Central Head Office File 61 62 (Part 2) War Veteran Torch Commando; UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information file 158 (Part 1) War Veteran Torch Commando; UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information file 158 (Part 2) War Veteran Torch Commando; UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information, File 35, Biographies 1951-1976; UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information, File 65 1 5 (part 2), General Election 1953 UP Candidates Information; UNISA-UP Archive, Sir De Villiers Graaff Papers, File 1.15.1 United Party Papers 1958-1977; Wits Historical Papers, Springbok Legion, A617; DOD Archive, PA; Lovell, *Love of Justice*.

<sup>984</sup> Roos, *Ordinary Springboks*, 130.

The speed and urgency of the formation of the WVAC and the Steel Commando in May 1951 had left the initial activities distributed across the offices of many organisations and individuals. Clapham explains:

Because of the urgency of the moment, many of us drew on various organisational resources as a stop-gap measure during the fight against the vote Bill. I drew on the United Party. The Springbok Legion used its office and staff. Mr Kowarsky and others used the resources of private business undertakings and so on.<sup>985</sup>

The looseness of these arrangements meant that the WVAC's initial principles and programme of action had been a compromise between its constituent parts. The WVAC had crafted the initial message broadly enough to satisfy a diverse audience. Thus, the WVAC's ambiguous appeal to war memories echoed of the ex-servicemen's own struggle and vocalised their feelings. As a WVAC and later Torch spokesperson expressed, "the men who fought did so for principles they can only vaguely express. But we know that legislation like this is a direct negation of what we fought for ..."<sup>986</sup> When pushed for a policy statement from the Torch, Gordon was evasive. "Questions such as apartheid and the industrial Colour Bar are matters for political parties. The Torch is not a political party. It therefore is not required to deal with those questions."<sup>987</sup> Thus, when the WVAC- reconstituted as the Torch in June 1951 it preferred to cast itself as a mass movement that protected the constitution, leaving the articulation of detailed political positions to the UP.

The WVAC-Torch's declared division of labour focused on mobilising ex-servicemen against the NP. However, this did not dissuade the constituent partners and prominent individuals from swaying the WVAC-Torch political agenda. The initial involvement of the SL in the WVAC had allowed the infiltration of former CPSA members into subcommittees. Table 4.4 shows the rank differences between the UP supporters and the Springbok legionnaires, which suggests that where the UP was able to use the social capital of their members to dominate the national positions, the SL was better positioned to dominate the running of the lower level working committees. Ex-servicemen who had foreknowledge of the CPSA Trojan horse tactics were suspicious that these ex-servicemen would attempt to subvert the Torch. Schwarz, who had previously studied law with Slovo, "...first drew the attention of the Action Committee [WVAC] to their presence on certain committees."<sup>988</sup>

To Clapham, it seemed that Springbok legionnaires "speak, act and vote as a bloc which has met and discussed committee strategy and tactics before W.V.A.C. meetings...[to] ...swing the W.V.A.C. in line with Springbok Legion Policy."<sup>989</sup> For Clapham, the Legion's behaviour was especially

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<sup>985</sup> UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information, Subject File 158 (Part 1), War Veterans Torch Commando, 'A Few Remarks of Problems at Present Facing the WVAC'.

<sup>986</sup> Everatt, *The Origins of Non-Racialism*, 38.

<sup>987</sup> Walker, *Sailor Malan. A Biography*, 169.

<sup>988</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2077, Kane-Berman, 'The Torch Commando. Its Beginning and End', 7.

<sup>989</sup> UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information, Subject File 158 (Part 1), War Veterans Torch Commando, 'A Few Remarks of Problems at Present Facing the WVAC'.

irksome, as similar tactics had led to him leaving the SL in 1948.<sup>990</sup> Clapham was indignant about removing the taint of the SL. As he noted, “The choice is clear: Get the Springbok Legion members off the committee - or keep them on [and] sound the death knell of the WVAC as an effective body...”<sup>991</sup> Furthermore, the NP had linked the violence during the Steel Commando to the SL, and had labelled the WVAC as a communist front.<sup>992</sup> In a WVAC meeting on 7 June 1951, Parrott and Major Jacob Pretorius, the Member of the Provincial Council for Roodepoort, used the sceptre of the Suppression of Communism Act of 1950 to successfully argue for the removal of the suspected SL members from the WVAC committees.<sup>993</sup>

The SL’s expulsion from the Torch in 1951, coupled with the banning and disbanding of the CPSA the previous year in 1950, left the SL leadership without access to White parliamentary politics. The SL’s eviction from White politics meant that they were left to engage in multi-racial politics. SL’s support for the African National Congress (ANC) Defiance campaign in April 1952 positioned the Legion as the preferred White partner for the Congress movement. The SL used this goodwill to outmanoeuvre other liberals at the Darragh Hall meeting in November 1952 to become the White voice of multi-racial politics. Chapter 5 deals with the SL’s entry into multi-racial politics in 1952.

The CPSA was not alone in infiltrating the WVAC-Torch. Clapham, almost taking a leaf out of the communists’ playbook, had ensured that UP supporters were present in all committees. He reassured Marais Steyn, “I am ex-officio on the main committee and on all sub-committees with an eye to the party’s interests...the whole outfit is well-larded with Party supporters, and I don’t think we need worry.”<sup>994</sup> As shown in Table 4.4 above, the UP leveraged the social capital of the military ranks of its members to dominate the national committees. Thus, nationally the UP could direct WVAC-Torch decision-making. In the same spirit, Hamilton-Russel attended WVAC meetings to report the proceedings to Strauss secretly.<sup>995</sup> Also, when the Torch formed regional committees after June 1951, many UP members rose to leadership positions. Eglin was “elected chairman of the Pinelands branch of the Torch and made the branch representative of the organisation’s Cape executive committee”.<sup>996</sup> In the Cape Province, Marais chaired the Robertson Torch before standing in the 1953 parliamentary elections,<sup>997</sup> and Willem Steytler, brother of Jan Steytler, was the chair of

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<sup>990</sup> UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information, Subject File 158 (Part 1), War Veterans Torch Commando, ‘A Few Remarks of Problems at Present Facing the WVAC’.

<sup>991</sup> UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information, Subject File 158 (Part 1), War Veterans Torch Commando, ‘A Few Remarks of Problems at Present Facing the WVAC’.

<sup>992</sup> Boulter, ‘FC Erasmus and the Politics of South African Defence 1948-1959’, 238; White, ‘The South African Parliamentary Opposition, 1948-1953’, 267.

<sup>993</sup> White, ‘The South African Parliamentary Opposition, 1948-1953’, 267–68. UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information, Subject File 158 (Part 1), Rough Notes on Meeting of the Johannesburg War Veterans Action Committee held on Thursday, 7<sup>th</sup> June, 1951’.

<sup>994</sup> UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information, Subject File 158 (Part 1), War Veterans Torch Commando, ‘Letter from V Clapham to Marais Steyn Dated 10th May 1951’.

<sup>995</sup> White, ‘The South African Parliamentary Opposition, 1948-1953’, 266.

<sup>996</sup> Eglin, *Crossing the Borders of Power*, 47.

<sup>997</sup> Venter, ‘Majoer J.P. Marais : Die Skepper van Klipdrif Brandewyn’, 120.

the Burgersdorp Torch and the UP Branch in Rebelhoek.<sup>998</sup> Thus, the UP having inserted its members into the Torch, soon viewed the Torch as merely an extension of itself.

Despite Clapham's reassurances that the UP could effectively influence the WVAC-Torch, another UP actor had also unobtrusively infiltrated the national leadership of the WVAC-Torch. Throughout the life of the Torch, Oppenheimer had made repeated efforts to monitor and influence the Torch. At the onset of the WVAC in May 1951 he pushed for his private secretary, Sailor Malan, to lead in a figurehead role, to check the Legion's leftist influence.<sup>999</sup> The ex-servicemen unanimously elected Sailor Malan as the National President of the Torch at the Inaugural national conference at the Langham Hotel in Johannesburg on 28 June 1951.<sup>1000</sup> Oppenheimer never doubted Sailor Malan's loyalty to the UP, with Malan believing that the "... movement might well throw up some useful talent for the Party."<sup>1001</sup> Sailor Malan, once in play, often consulted with Oppenheimer and the UP on Torch matters.<sup>1002</sup> Oppenheimer also extended his influence over two other Torch organisers, Etheredge, who had come to the Torch via the SL, and Keith Acutt, an employee of Anglo-American, who Kane-Berman accused of being "the eyes and ears of Oppenheimer."<sup>1003</sup> Etheredge had come under Oppenheimer's patronage in May 1951, when he had accepted part-time employment at Anglo-American to fund his doctoral studies.<sup>1004</sup> Oppenheimer's final lever came about in 1952 when he began financing the Torch Activities.<sup>1005</sup>

In or about 1952 I [Kane Berman] was approached by Mr Oppenheimer who suggested that the Torch Commando should not dissipate its efforts in fund raising ... Except for regional appeals and small fetes, the Torch abandoned its appeal to the business community. This was, in retrospect, my first major blunder. It was wrong to say, as has been frequently suggested that the Torch was financed by the Anglo American Corporation.<sup>1006</sup>

Oppenheimer's indirect involvement, however, led the NP to accuse the Torch of being funded by the United South Africa Trust Fund and cited the presence of Sailor Malan and Acutt as further evidence of the involvement of 'Oppenheimer Ltd.'<sup>1007</sup> After the Torch had imploded in 1953, the appointment of Acutt and Etheredge to Anglo-American offices in Salisbury Rhodesia confirmed

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<sup>998</sup> UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information, File 65.1.5 (Part 2), General Elections 1953, 'Biography of United Party Candidate for General Elections 1953: Willem Johannes Steytler'.

<sup>999</sup> White, 'The South African Parliamentary Opposition, 1948-1953', 266.

<sup>1000</sup> Roos, *Ordinary Springboks*, 148; Wits Historical Papers A2077, Kane-Berman, 'The Torch Commando. Its Beginning and End', 5.

<sup>1001</sup> UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information, Subject File 158 (Part 1), War Veterans Torch Commando, 'Letter from AG Malan to H F Oppenheimer Dated 12 May 1951'.

<sup>1002</sup> White, 'The South African Parliamentary Opposition, 1948-1953', 269.

<sup>1003</sup> White, 307 footnote 26.

<sup>1004</sup> University of Witwatersrand, 'Citation to Honorary Graduate: Dennis Arthur Etheredge' (Johannesburg: University of Witwatersrand).

<sup>1005</sup> White, 'The South African Parliamentary Opposition, 1948-1953', 266.

<sup>1006</sup> Wits Historical Papers A2077, Kane-Berman, 'The Torch Commando. Its Beginning and End', 10.

<sup>1007</sup> Walker, *Sailor Malan. A Biography*, 165.



Oppenheimer's influence and gave credence to the idea that Anglo-American played an instrumental part in the Torch.<sup>1008</sup>

Control for the ideals of the Torch was further complicated by the Torch's Natal Region, which came into existence on a different trajectory as the Transvaal and Cape Regions, and persistently undermined the national focus of Sailor Malan. Where the Transvaal and Cape regions mobilised around resistance for the removal of the Coloured Franchise, the Natal regions were more concerned over the possibility of the government declaring a Republic. They saw the Coloured Franchise as only the first step by the NP to remove the equal status of English and Afrikaans and eventually the declaration of a Republic. The Natal leadership included prominent ex-servicemen, such as Arthur Selby, a retired British General, Gillie Ford, Leo Caney, Roger Brickhill and Reverend James Chutter, who were loyal to the concept of union.<sup>1009</sup> They were also especially wary of the UP leader in Natal, Douglas Mitchell, who in turn distrusted the Torch.<sup>1010</sup> To prevent the diluting of their concerns, they conceived the idea of the 'Natal Stand', which stated that Natal would break away from South Africa on the declaration of a South African Republic. They carefully marshalled the Torch into supporting their declaration, despite opposition from Sailor Malan. The ensuing tensions in Natal over the 'Natal Stand' did not only divide the Torch, but also contributed to a continued anti-Republican streak in Natal.<sup>1011</sup>

Like the SL, liberals also hoped that participation in the Torch would provide them with a means to swing the UP towards more liberal policies. Marquard, a distinguished liberal who headed the AES, explained:

Liberals threw themselves heart and soul into the movement but never thought it was a liberal movement ... The Torch Commando could never be a liberal movement but it could scare the UP; it certainly did scare the Nationalists; put new heart into the opposition; it gave many non-whites the feeling that all whites were not illiberal; and it might just possibly accustom a few more people to liberal ideas.<sup>1012</sup>

The speed of its inception and the pace by which it grew meant despite efforts by the various actors to control the movement, the Torch would quickly develop independence of action.<sup>1013</sup> Furthermore, the intrigues surrounding the control of the Torch indicated that although the ex-serviceman identity provided a unifying banner, the ex-servicemen community did not share a homogenous political disposition, which the following section explores.

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<sup>1008</sup> A. King, 'Identity and Decolonisation: The Policy of Partnership in Southern Rhodesia 1945-62' (PhD Thesis, Oxford University, 2001), 109; University of Witwatersrand, 'Citation to Honorary Graduate: Dennis Arthur Etheredge' (Johannesburg: University of Witwatersrand).

<sup>1009</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2077, Kane-Berman, 'The Torch Commando. Its Beginning and End', 11.

<sup>1010</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2077, Kane-Berman, 'The Torch Commando. Its Beginning and End', 14.

<sup>1011</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2077, Kane-Berman, 'The Torch Commando. Its Beginning and End', 12.

<sup>1012</sup> Everatt, *The Origins of Non-Racialism*, 165.

<sup>1013</sup> White, 'The South African Parliamentary Opposition, 1948-1953', 328.

#### 4.4.4 The Torch in the United Democratic Front

On the removal of the taint of the SL from the WVAC and the WVAC reconstitution as the Torch in June 1951, Sailor Malan and Kane-Berman, began the setting up of committees in towns and ‘*dorps*’ across the country in order to “...oust nationalist government by all constitutional means”.<sup>1014</sup> The Torch would use these committees to support the UP and LP in electioneering. In the wake of the 1951 Municipal elections, the UP and the Torch had agreed on 8 November 1951 that “...the services of the [Torch] Commando could be used in canvassing, registration, deletion, clerical and other organisational work in collaboration with and to supplement the efforts of the [United] Party”.<sup>1015</sup> Almost immediately, Torch members were critical of the UP, claiming that UP public representatives were “poor and lack public confidence” and that the party lacked “a definite constructive policy on many important issues and is much given to deliberate vagueness in order to appeal to rural and urban electorates”.<sup>1016</sup> To make matters worse, the Torch felt that the old guard within the UP was smug and sentimental, and in turn, the UP was irritated by the involvement of the Torch in electioneering.<sup>1017</sup>

In 1952, the UP and Torch expanded the previously mentioned agreement of 8 November 1951 to include the UP, LP and the Torch in an election pact despite the reservations of Parrott and Kane-Berman.<sup>1018</sup> In early April 1952, Kane-Berman and Parrott held a meeting with Strauss and Graaff of the UP, where the UP agreed not to oppose the LP in the upcoming election the following year only if the Torch agreed to the formation of a United Democratic Front (UDF or the Front), also referred to as the Front or the United Front.<sup>1019</sup> Later that month, on 16 April 1952, Strauss surprised the LP by announcing that the UP, LP and Torch had agreed to form a United Democratic Front to fight against the government.<sup>1020</sup> That same evening in Greenside Johannesburg, Kane-Berman in an independent press briefing threatened to call a day of national protest if the NP attempted unconstitutional action. Kane-Berman warned that the Torch might take further unspecified actions “... as good soldiers we must have something in reserve.”<sup>1021</sup> Such independent action was not welcomed by the UP who viewed the Torch as a mere subsidiary.

Later that year (August 1952), Kane-Berman’s independent streak led to a secret meeting between Graaff and Oppenheimer of the UP and a Torch delegation headed by Kane-Berman to “explore the

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<sup>1014</sup> Walker, *Sailor Malan. A Biography*, 167.

<sup>1015</sup> UNISA-UP Archive, Central Head Office, File 61 62 (Part 1) ‘Memorandum on Agreement Arrived at Between Senoir Officials of the Torch Commando and the United Party on Wednesday, November 8, 1951’

<sup>1016</sup> UNISA-UP Archive, Central Head Office, File 61 62 (Part 1), ‘Appendix to Letter from R Parrott to van Biljon Dated 3 Dec 1951’.

<sup>1017</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2077, Kane-Berman, ‘The Torch Commando. Its Beginning and End’, 14.

<sup>1018</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2077, Kane-Berman, ‘The Torch Commando. Its Beginning and End’, 14.

<sup>1019</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2077, Kane-Berman, ‘The Torch Commando. Its Beginning and End’, 14.

<sup>1020</sup> White, ‘The South African Parliamentary Opposition, 1948-1953’, 312.

<sup>1021</sup> Kane-Berman, ‘The Rise and Fall of the Torch Commando’; White, ‘The South African Parliamentary Opposition, 1948-1953’, 314.

possibility of the two organisations merging.”<sup>1022</sup> While the Torch pushed the UP to reform, the UP pressured the Torch to ‘depoliticise’ and attempted to secure the resignation of Kane- Berman.<sup>1023</sup> The meeting was also used as a platform for establishing machinery for coordination for the upcoming elections.<sup>1024</sup> Despite some agreements over principles for a merger, nothing more came of the idea.<sup>1025</sup> The relationship between the UP and Torch was exposing the fractious nature of the political views of prominent ex-servicemen.

Once the Torchmen began working alongside the UP organisers in 1952, the UP’s organisational problems on the ground became more apparent. The UP had not addressed the issues that the Torch had raised during the November 1951 agreement, which added further strain between the UP and the Torch. On the ground in Cape Town, Eglin describes the challenges that the Torch faced as “The Commando was shocked at the state of disarray they found in many UP formations, and frustrated by the old-fashioned approach that many of the old-guard office-bearers had to effective organisation.”<sup>1026</sup>

Working with the UP blunted the Torch’s mass non-partisan appeal and disillusioned many of its liberal leaders:

The process is very disillusioning both for Torch’s leaders and the 234,000 supporters, none of whom has had any reason to be overconfident that the United Party has the drive, magnetism, or even the right machinery to capture the 1953 electorate majority.<sup>1027</sup>

The Torch leadership were concerned over the UP attempts to side-line the LP in the Front, as it undermined the Torch’s non-partisan appeal. Furthermore, the Torch had hoped that the sympathetic Nationalist voters, who would not vote UP, could be persuaded to vote Labour. The Torch, therefore, opposed the UP’s attempt to contest seats against the LP.<sup>1028</sup> In Natal, many who had joined the Torch to protect Natalian interests distrusted the UP and saw Natal’s rights and Torch ideals sacrificed to UP electoral expediency, which eventually contributed to the derailing of the Torch.<sup>1029</sup> Thus the Front, instead of fostering co-operation between the members, only served to expose how morbid the UP election machinery had become.

Despite frustrations and reservations from the Torch, it provided support to both the UP and LP during the 1953 elections. The Torch provided 15 full-time organisers, 5 000 cars and 60 000 canvassers to help the candidates of the Front.<sup>1030</sup> The use of military jargon, code words and

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<sup>1022</sup> White, ‘The South African Parliamentary Opposition, 1948-1953’, 327-328; Eglin, *Crossing the Borders of Power*, 47-48; White, ‘The United Party and the 1953 General Election’, 67–80.

<sup>1023</sup> White, ‘The United Party and the 1953 General Election’, 75.

<sup>1024</sup> White, ‘The South African Parliamentary Opposition, 1948-1953’, 328.

<sup>1025</sup> Eglin, *Crossing the Borders of Power*, 48.

<sup>1026</sup> Eglin, 46.

<sup>1027</sup> Walker, *Sailor Malan. A Biography*, 178.

<sup>1028</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2077, Kane-Berman, ‘The Torch Commando. Its Beginning and End’, 13.

<sup>1029</sup> Reid, ‘The Federal Party, 1953-1962’, 12.

<sup>1030</sup> Reid, 37.

organised vehicle convoys attracted support and allowed the ex-servicemen to relive the excitement of war service and contributed to a sense of purpose in support of the Front.

In the Torch Commando we set up a system of communication and mobilisation based on chain of telephone calls. In Pinelands we could get a convoy of up to thirty fully laden motor cars to assemble at a pre-determined rendezvous once a few words of a coded password had been sent. Morale was high, and the spirit de corps was good. Ex-servicemen relived the spirit of camaraderie and unity of purpose of the war.<sup>1031</sup>

The Torch not only supported the parties to canvass and register new voters but also protected their meetings from NP disruption, which often turned violent and resulted in casualties on the political battlefield.<sup>1032</sup> As Eglin and Kane-Berman recalled:

The hall was overflowing with Nats, and the atmosphere was tense. We posted some well-built men from the Torch Commando in strategic positions in the hall to deal with any scuffles.<sup>1033</sup>

A Torch/United Front meeting in the Johannesburg suburb of Vrededorp in June 1952 was so violently attacked that between 80 and 100 people had to be treated by doctors on site, while 32 were taken to hospital. Iron bars and sticks with nails in them were used in this attack.<sup>1034</sup>

In the George constituency, where Torchman Marais ran against the NP's most effective electioneerer, Botha, matters got so out of hand at an election meeting at Karatara, that Marais drew a pistol in defence of his family, earning himself the nickname '*Koos pistool*'. At a subsequent meeting at the George showgrounds, Marais and his election manager and fellow Torchman, Major General James Mitchell-Baker, had to be escorted away under police protection.<sup>1035</sup> The Front, despite internal disputes, presented a unified opposition to the NP in the build-up to the 1953 election campaign. However, two issues remained unresolved between the UP and the Torch, namely the issue of Republic and the growing need to engage in multi-racial politics. The next section covers these issues.

## 4.5 PROBLEMS IN THE UNITED DEMOCRATIC FRONT

Two principle issues plagued the smooth running of the Front from its inception, namely the establishment of a Republic and race relations. Ford and the Natal Torch pushed the anti-Republican stance and Kane-Berman triggered the race relations issue.

### 4.5.1 The Natal stand

Ford was one of the more influential Torchmen in Natal as the chairman of the larger of the two Natal regions, namely the Coastal Region. He had developed a dislike for the 'wishy-washy' policies of the UP and had identified racial and linguistic differences as vantage points from which he could launch

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<sup>1031</sup> Eglin, *Crossing the Borders of Power*, 47.

<sup>1032</sup> Wits Historical Papers A2077, Kane-Berman, 'The Torch Commando. Its Beginning and End', 7-8.

<sup>1033</sup> Eglin, *Crossing the Borders of Power*, 50.

<sup>1034</sup> Kane-Berman, 'The Rise and Fall of the Torch Commando'.

<sup>1035</sup> Venter, 'Majoor JP Marais : Die Skepper van Klipdrif Brandewyn', 122.

a bold political move.<sup>1036</sup> His solution would aim to both refute the increasingly centralist tendencies of the UP and oppose Apartheid. Within the Natal Torch, Chutter, the Chairman of the smaller Inland Region, and Brickhill, the Natal Torch organiser, supported Ford.<sup>1037</sup> Their views placed the Natal Torch at variance with the National efforts to create a Front with the UP. Ford formulated his position on 6 June 1952 at a Torch Rally in Durban when he evoked an oath, which later became known as the 'Natal Stand', to protect the South African constitution.<sup>1038</sup> Ford, with a well-prepared delegation for Natal, was able to elevate the Natal Stand to a Torch Resolution at the First Annual Conference of the Torch, on 9 July 1952:

If, in her efforts to save Union, Natal is forced to stand alone, the Torch Commando throughout South Africa and South West Africa affirms its readiness to support Natal to the full by whatever action the National executive may deem necessary.<sup>1039</sup>

By August 1952, at the same time that Graaff was secretly negotiating with Kane-Berman for the merging of the Torch into the UP, Ford was thinking of forming a new party "... based on Torch ideals coupled with a Federal and a progressive non-European policy."<sup>1040</sup> Initially, Kane-Berman was opposed to the idea of the Torch executive members forming a political party or even standing for election.<sup>1041</sup> However, Ford, Chutter and Brickhill used the Torch to soundboard ideas and bring like-minded people together. During 1952, Ford and Chutter attempted to consolidate support for a new party among the Natal Torch and attempted to ensure the nomination of parliamentary candidates in Natal that were in support of the Natal Stand. They hoped that by doing so, they could establish a kernel of a new party.<sup>1042</sup>

Within the Natal Torch, some supported the UP. Roydon Fenhalls, a Natal solicitor that had served in the SAAF, argued that a new party would be futile, as the regeneration of the UP could happen from within its ranks.<sup>1043</sup> Others argued that considering the upcoming elections in 1953, it was not the opportune time to consider a new party.<sup>1044</sup> Ford's machinations so alienated UP supporters in the Natal Torch that by October 1952, Professor Pollock, Ken McIntyre, Fenhalls and four others resigned from the Torch.<sup>1045</sup>

By December 1952 it became necessary for Selby, Ford, Chutter and Brickhill to meet with a UP delegation that included Strauss, Graaff, and Mitchell to smooth over the relationship between the

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<sup>1036</sup> Reid, 'The Federal Party, 1953-1962', 12.

<sup>1037</sup> Reid, 12.

<sup>1038</sup> Reid, 15.

<sup>1039</sup> Reid, 17.

<sup>1040</sup> White, 'The South African Parliamentary Opposition, 1948-1953', 363; Reid, 'The Federal Party, 1953-1962', 18.

<sup>1041</sup> Wits Historical Papers A2077, Kane-Berman, 'The Torch Commando. Its Beginning and End', 22.

<sup>1042</sup> White, 'The South African Parliamentary Opposition, 1948-1953', 377.

<sup>1043</sup> Reid, 'The Federal Party, 1953-1962', 20.

<sup>1044</sup> Reid, 21.

<sup>1045</sup> Reid, 24.

Natal Torch and the UP. When Strauss rejected the idea of the 'Natal Stand' outright, it became apparent that the formation of a new party would occur after the 1953 elections.<sup>1046</sup>

On 17 January 1953, at the Joint National executives meeting of the Torch in Pietermaritzburg, Kane-Berman reiterated the Torch's resolution of 9 July 1952 in support of the Natal Stand.<sup>1047</sup> Encouraged by support from the National Chairman, in early April 1953, the Natal Torch leaders informed him that they intended to launch a new party after the elections. At Kane-Berman's request, they agreed to launch the party after the meeting of the Torch's National Executive in May 1953, which would decide on the future of the Torch.<sup>1048</sup> The UP's inability to develop a straightforward political programme to counter the NP's assault on the entrenched clauses of the constitution so frustrated the Torch in Natal that even in the build-up to the 1953 elections motions was made to establish a new political party. The diverging political views of the ex-servicemen made it impossible for the UP to formulate a satisfactorily inclusive political position in opposition to the NP. Wartime anti-fascist rhetoric was no longer enough.

#### 4.5.2 The Torch and race policy

The UP's inability to build internal consensus over race relations was apparent when the Torch received the UP manifesto with the section dealing with race relations left blank.<sup>1049</sup> The race relations issue was a matter of grave concern for many Torch members, who had hoped that the Torch would nudge the UP towards a more progressive stance on race relations. The Torch harboured many liberally minded ex-servicemen, for instance, Bill Conradie, who had lost both his legs during the war. He was "...a man of very liberal views and was not afraid to express them no matter where he spoke".<sup>1050</sup> Lee-Warden had hoped the Torch "would give the UP the necessary impetus it needed to move in another direction ...opposed to apartheid".<sup>1051</sup> Ford criticised the UP Policy as being "apartheid enunciated with 'honey in the voice'".<sup>1052</sup> Kane-Berman and the inner circle of the executive "were disenchanted with the [United] Party and always hoped that possibly the Torch would be a catalyst for change towards a more enlightened or progressive policy".<sup>1053</sup>

Even within the UP, there was a belief that the Torch could nudge the UP towards a more progressive stance. Helen Suzman urged Kane-Berman and Wilson to make prominent Torch members available for election. She argued that they would then be able to reform the party from within its ranks. By

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<sup>1046</sup> Reid, 'The Federal Party, 1953-1962', 30.

<sup>1047</sup> Reid, 31.

<sup>1048</sup> Reid, 47, 49.

<sup>1049</sup> Wits Historical Papers A2077, Kane-Berman, 'The Torch Commando. Its Beginning and End', 15.

<sup>1050</sup> Wits Historical Papers A2077, Kane-Berman, 'The Torch Commando. Its Beginning and End', 15.

<sup>1051</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2521 aa, David Everatt Papers; 'Memoirs Len Lee-Warden', 41.

<sup>1052</sup> Reid, 'The Federal Party, 1953-1962', 12.

<sup>1053</sup> Wits Historical Papers A2077, Kane-Berman, 'The Torch Commando. Its Beginning and End', 22.



this time, Kane-Berman felt that "...it would be easier to join the Nationalist Party and reform it from within than attempt to reform the UP from within".<sup>1054</sup>

The test of the Torch's progressive stance on race came in January 1953, when CR Swart as Minister of Justice, introduced the Criminal Laws Amendment Bill and the Public Safety Bill, commonly known as the 'Swart Bills', which gave the Minister of Justice immense powers in the event of civil unrest. The UP supported these bills on the grounds of national security where the Torch insisted that the bills conflicted with the Torch's principles.<sup>1055</sup> Gordon equated these bills as an attempt to introduce a dictatorship.<sup>1056</sup> Kane-Berman, aware of the inroads being made by White radicals in Black politics at the expense of liberalism, probably felt that opposing these bills would address some of the ANC cynicism towards White liberals. He argued that "... unless the Torch Commando take the lead and the initiative in rousing public feeling against these Bills, the lead will be taken by other less responsible organisations (both European and non-European) ...".<sup>1057</sup>

For Kane-Berman, the issue came to a head at a luncheon hosted by Oppenheimer. He was prompted by Oppenheimer to elaborate on the Torch's position. He took affront when a UP MP<sup>1058</sup> with whom he had served in the desert during the war, refuted his argument when he flippantly stated, "Louis you are talking nonsense. During the war Smuts threw many Afrikaners into prison without trial and now because the government wants to imprison some ...[African]... trouble-makers, you now wish to raise all manner of objections." <sup>1059</sup>

Realising that the UP would not oppose the bills he immediately called a meeting of the National and Provincial Executive of the Torch and invited the leaders of the UP and LP. Pilkington-Jordan, leading an ill-prepared UP representation, failed to convince the meeting of the UP position in support of the Bills. In contrast, Christie and Lovell from the LP were more convincing in persuading the meeting to oppose the bills.<sup>1060</sup> The meeting of over 70 executive members of the Torch "... decided unanimously there and then that if these bills went ahead, we would call a national day of protest."<sup>1061</sup> Kane-Berman, on the back of the support of the meeting, drafted a brief statement which the executive, including Sailor Malan and Parrott, approved and called a press conference for the next day. Sailor Malan withdrew to Graaff's farm that night despite Kane-Berman entreating him to attend the press conference.<sup>1062</sup>

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<sup>1054</sup> Wits Historical Papers A2077, Kane-Berman, 'The Torch Commando. Its Beginning and End', 15.

<sup>1055</sup> Reid, 'The Federal Party, 1953-1962', 36.

<sup>1056</sup> Kane-Berman, 'The Rise and Fall of the Torch Commando'.

<sup>1057</sup> UNISA-UP Archive, Central Head Office, File 61 62 (Part 1), 'Letter from L Kane-Berman to NJ de Wet dated 10 February 1953'.

<sup>1058</sup> Both Louis Kane Berman and John Kane Berman have been careful not to name this person directly however there was only one MP at the time that had both served in North Africa with Kane Berman and was a prominent employee of Anglo America.

<sup>1059</sup> Wits Historical Papers A2077, Kane-Berman, 'The Torch Commando. Its Beginning and End', 20.

<sup>1060</sup> Wits Historical Papers A2077, Kane-Berman, 'The Torch Commando. Its Beginning and End', 20-21.

<sup>1061</sup> Kane-Berman, 'The Rise and Fall of the Torch Commando'.

<sup>1062</sup> Wits Historical Papers A2077, Kane-Berman, 'The Torch Commando. Its Beginning and End', 21.

Although the media received the press conference on 8 February 1953 positively, it divided loyalties among the executive, with a number withdrawing their support for the statement claiming that they had not authorised the statement.<sup>1063</sup> Furthermore, big businesses and mines, unsettled by the economic implications of a day of protest, withdrew their funding from the Torch. The earlier decision to stop independent fundraising by the Torch now weighed heavily.<sup>1064</sup>

Thus, the Torch's ambiguous policy positions to ensure mass appeal, and its reluctance to become a parliamentary party proved the movements undoing. As soon as the Torch pushed in an independent direction, the UP and business withdrew funding and support. The Torch financially vulnerable and unsure of its members' overlaid loyalties became unable to marsh the various stakeholders' divergent political interests and floundered as the 1953 elections neared.

#### 4.5.3 The dimming of the Torch's flame

The fallout from the call for a National Day of Protest by Kane-Berman on 8 February 1953 and increased tensions between Ford and Mitchell in Natal meant that the Torch was on its final legs. Clapham's 'well-larding' of Torch committees with UP supporters and Oppenheimer's financial levers although insufficient to keep the Torch pliant to UP wishes, were enough to break the Torch's cohesion. Kane-Berman blamed the UP infiltration for the implosion of the Torch, "[t]he answer may well be that some members felt they owed a greater allegiance to the United Party than they did to the Torch Commando."<sup>1065</sup> He believed that the UP had been opportunistic and dishonest in its relationship with the Torch:

The end of the Torch Commando heralded, in my view, the ultimate collapse of the United Party. In retrospect perhaps the idealism of the Torch Commando was no answer to an ever-burgeoning nationalism more particularly when the opposition had lost direction and political integrity.<sup>1066</sup>

After the UP defeat in the 15 April 1953 general elections, the Torch lost most of its momentum and faded by September 1953. In its short time, it had shed light on the UP's inability to oppose the NP, and unwillingness to provide an alternative to Apartheid.

However, the Torch's appeal, although largely forgotten, can partly be attributed to the way the movement accommodated the aspirations of its members. For many ex-servicemen, the Torch was a platform where they could express solidarity in a vision forged during the war and under threat from the NP. Although the Torch was able to boast the support of over 600 000 members, the organisation was organised in various strata, allowing it to optimise its members social capital. At the national level senior military officers and prominent people, such as the "retired generals,

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<sup>1063</sup> Wits Historical Papers A2077, Kane-Berman, 'The Torch Commando. Its Beginning and End', 21; Kane-Berman, 'The Rise and Fall of the Torch Commando'.

<sup>1064</sup> Kane-Berman, 'The Rise and Fall of the Torch Commando'.

<sup>1065</sup> Wits Historical Papers A2077, Kane-Berman, 'The Torch Commando. Its Beginning and End', 21.

<sup>1066</sup> Wits Historical Papers A2077, Kane-Berman, 'The Torch Commando. Its Beginning and End', 22.

brigadiers, judges, lawyers and sportsmen [who had] answered the roll-call", <sup>1067</sup> assumed figurehead positions which gave the Torch gravitas and access to extensive social capital. At the executive leadership level more politically experienced and men of lower ranks ran the operations of the Torch.<sup>1068</sup> These included Sailor Malan as the National President and Kane-Berman as the National Chairman, on the National Executive Committee. An Action Committee, which ran the daily business of the Torch comprised Accutt, Conradie, Etheredge (as Publicist, a role he had fulfilled in the Legion), Kowarsky (as National Treasurer), Guy Nicholson, Wilson, Parrott (as National Director) and Charles Bekker (as National Organiser).<sup>1069</sup> The Torch also leant on the professional and occupational knowledge of its members, such as when the Torch had to prepare a legal opinion on the constitution, there were sound legal minds at hand.<sup>1070</sup> Of the group under consideration, about a sixth were legal practitioners. These included *inter alia* Wilson, Schwarz, Gordon, Ford, Kane-Berman, John Lang, Leslie Rubin, Robert Hughes-Mason, Denis Fannin, and Michael Corbett. Thus, the Torch entwined its members into the political fabric of the period.

Furthermore, Erasmus' military reforms had provided the Torch with a steady stream of fresh supporters and organisers, as a growing number of aggrieved officers, who had found themselves unwelcome in the Permanent Force and ACF found a new home in the Torch. Erasmus had so alienated the men of the UDF that in his first four and a half years as Defence Minister (between 1 June 1948 and 31 December 1952), 184 officers and 2 752 men from the PF and 469 officers from the ACF left the UDF as indicated in Table 4.5:<sup>1071</sup>

**Table 4.5: Resignations from the UDF from 1 June 1948 until 31 December 1952**<sup>1072</sup>

		Army	Airforce	Navy	Total
Permanent Force	Officers	93 (include 30 women)	82 (include 2 women)	9	186 (32)
	NCO	901	781	1070	2752
ACF	Officers	399	13	57	469

Between June 1950 and April 1951, the ACF lost on average 22 officers a month from resignations.<sup>1073</sup> The government also treated retiring senior ACF officers poorly, perceiving their wartime experience as evidence of loyalty to Smuts and the UP. Erasmus found flimsy reasons not

<sup>1067</sup> Walker, *Sailor Malan. A Biography*, 164. Wits Historical Papers, A2077, Kane-Berman, 'The Torch Commando. Its Beginning and End', 7.

<sup>1068</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2521 aa, David Everatt Papers; 'Memoirs Len Lee-Warden', 44.

<sup>1069</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2077, Kane-Berman, 'The Torch Commando. Its Beginning and End', 5.

<sup>1070</sup> Eglin, *Crossing the Borders of Power*, 47.

<sup>1071</sup> Kommandant-Generaal/ Group 5/ 204, Questions in Parliament, 'Answer to Parliamentary Question by Mr PA Moore dated 6 February 1953'.

<sup>1072</sup> Kommandant-Generaal/ Group 5/ 204, Questions in Parliament, 'Answer to Parliamentary Question by Mr PA Moore dated 6 February 1953'.

<sup>1073</sup> Boulter, 'FC Erasmus and the Politics of South African Defence 1948-1959', 65.

to promote them often, which was contrary to the practice at the time. The most controversial were Lieutenant Colonel Eric Thompson (Transvaal Scottish) and Lieutenant Colonel Noël McMillan (Natal Mounted Rifles). Thompson, on his transfer to the Reserve, became involved in the Torch, accepting the Chairmanship of the Southern Transvaal District. It was unfortunate that he did this before the gazetting of his promotion, as Erasmus cancelled the promotion. However, the Transvaal Scottish ignored Erasmus's reversal, and in June 1977 Thompson was appointed Honorary Colonel 2 Transvaal Scottish.<sup>1074</sup> In the case of McMillan, enquiries regarding his 'step-up' in rank, led to the Acting Adjutant General informing the staff officer working on the matter that "We do NOT want to promote him, but he is pressing and I want a reason to turn him down".<sup>1075</sup> McMillan also joined the Torch.<sup>1076</sup> Brigadier James Durrant left the SAAF in March 1952, in protest of being side-lined, and became a leading spokesman for the Torch. Major-General George Brink soon joined him in the Torch. Both men criticised Erasmus for destroying the prestige that the UDF had won in the war.<sup>1077</sup> Thus Erasmus had through his reforms inadvertently strengthened both the leadership cadre and credibility of the Torch.

Despite the commitment of the Torch to fighting the NP, all of the leaders held down full-time jobs, with only Parrott being a full-time employee of the Torch. Table 4.6 illustrates the difference between the occupational class of the Torch's leadership cadres and that of the 'ordinary soldiers' as identified by Jonathan Fennell in Chapter 2. The preponderance of the intermediate and professional ex-servicemen in the direction and operations of the Torch indicates that although the Torch had mass appeal, the leadership remained the realm of the political elite. Although elite and middle-class occupations had provided the means for these men to engage in the political struggle, they would have preferred to have left politics to the politicians.<sup>1078</sup> However, the tempo of the Torch's activities came with personal and career costs as Kane-Berman discovered. On the dissolution of the Torch, he found himself in financial ruin and had to disavow politics to secure employment at the law firm Hayman, Godfrey and Sanderson once he had disavowed politics.<sup>1079</sup>

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<sup>1074</sup> Mitchell, *Tartan on the Veld*, 48–49.

<sup>1075</sup> DOD Archive, PA, Personnel Service File, P1/40004/1 and P1/2535/1, 97.

<sup>1076</sup> UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information, File 65.1.5 (Part 2), General Elections 1953 'Biography of United Party Candidate for General Elections 1953: Noel Douglas McMillan'.

<sup>1077</sup> Boulter, 'FC Erasmus and the Politics of South African Defence 1948-1959', 239.

<sup>1078</sup> Walker, *Sailor Malan. A Biography*, 180.

<sup>1079</sup> J Kane Berman, *Between Two Fires: Holding the Liberal Centre in South African Politics* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2017), 24.

**Table 4.6: Occupational class of UDF soldiers in the sample group and Torch Commando leadership (n=153)<sup>1080</sup>**

Class	Occupations <sup>1081</sup>	UDF soldiers <sup>1082</sup>	Political Ex-servicemen <sup>1083</sup> (sample group)	Torch Commando
Professional	doctors, dentists, engineers, writers	3,1%	28%	31%
Intermediate	pharmacists, chemists, teachers, editorial staff	8%	41%	44%
Skilled	shop assistances, clerks, lorry drivers (SA only Farmers)	74,6%	20%	19%
Semi-Skilled	caretakers, railway porters, land workers	9,6%	0%	0%
Non skilled	labourers, factory workers, cleaners	4,8%	0%	0%
Unknown		0%	10%	6%

However, the end of the Torch in 1953 did not mark an end to the political aspirations of all the Torchmen. According to Historian and Torchman, Rodney Davenport, the Torch provided an entry into politics for ex-servicemen who would continue to shape the White political debate, as many members joined the Liberal Party(LPSA) and the Union Federal Party(UFP),<sup>1084</sup> which is discussed in the next chapter.

#### 4.6 CONCLUSION

In post-war South Africa, the UP, LP and the CPSA provided political homes for returning ex-servicemen, to continue their fight against the NP's crude nationalism. All three parties had representation in parliamentary, provincial and local Government, and stood opposed to the NP in the 1948 elections. Many of the ex-servicemen under consideration returned to working within the

<sup>1080</sup> Table created by Author from: *Who is Who in Southern Africa 1948-1977*; UNISA-UP Archive, Central Head Office File 61 62 (Part 2) War Veteran Torch Commando; UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information file 158 (Part 1) War Veteran Torch Commando; UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information file 158 (Part 2) War Veteran Torch Commando; UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information, File 35, Biographies 1951-1976; UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information, File 65 1 5 (part 2), General Election 1953 UP Candidates Information; UNISA-UP Archive, Sir De Villiers Graaff Papers, File 1.15.1 United Party Papers 1958-1977; Wits Historical Papers, Springbok Legion, A617; DOD Archive, PA; Lovell, *Love of Justice*; Fennell, *Fighting the People's War*, 186-87, 189-90

<sup>1081</sup> Fennell, *Fighting the People's War*, 186-87.

<sup>1082</sup> Fennell, 189-90.

<sup>1083</sup> Commissioned Permanent Force Officers, students and scholars are included in the intermediate occupations. Farmers are included in skilled occupations to be consistent with Fennell's methodology. Other agricultural occupations are included in the intermediate occupations. Where occupations were left blank on service cards, occupational classes were derived from UP *Curriculum Vita*, Biographies and Obituaries.

<sup>1084</sup> Davenport, *South Africa: A Modern History*, 331. TRH Davenport was an ex-servicemen, Torchman and members of the Liberal Party.

framework of political parties after the war, either achieving senior positions in the parties or representing their consistencies in Parliament or provincial council.

Outside of formal politics, the SL initially commanded the support of the 'ordinary' soldiers. As soldiers demobilised and reintegrated into society, the ordinary soldier initially slowly withdrew their support from the SL. However, rising NP harassment and oppression led to ex-servicemen establishing anti-nationalist committees at the local level. The UP and SL worked together to consolidate the growing anti-nationalist sentiment among the ex-servicemen into the WVAC-Torch. The Torch provided a politically non-aligned mass movement, which aimed to remove the taint of communism from veteran politics, and to provide a voting bloc in the 1953 elections for the UP. The veteran appeal drew ex-servicemen from a broad spectrum of political beliefs. The Torch provided a common political platform for ex-servicemen. For many, it was their first formal experience at political work.

The inability of both the SL and the Torch to substantially influence the behaviour of the dominant White opposition groupings created irreconcilable tensions within the veteran movements. The SL, although willing to support both the UP and the LP in the 1948 elections, became an early casualty of NP oppression. The passing of the Suppression of Communism Act in 1950 left the leadership cadre ostracised from White politics. Despite the SL's early participation in the forming of the Torch, the sceptre of the communist label saw them driven into the political wilderness. There they found allies within Black and multi-racial politics. The remnants of the SL were able to present themselves within the Congress Movement as an organisation that was representative of a White constituency. In this way, the radical ex-servicemen were able to insert themselves at the heart of the liberation movement.

Within parliamentary politics, ex-servicemen were able to use their positions to harangue the NP, especially on matters of national defence. The Ex-servicemen identity among the 1948 parliamentary caucus drew them together. Within the UP there was often a common purpose with the Torch, with some dual membership of its members. The Torch provided politically disinterested ex-servicemen with a soft entry into politics.

The Torch's reliance on the mass appeal of the ex-serviceman identity led to divergent political agendas within the movement. Beyond the wartime rhetoric of anti-fascism, there was little agreement on the fundamental issues at stake. Although the primary purpose of the Torch was to protect the constitution, the dominant narrative was the Coloured Franchise, which the Natal Torch saw as only the initial skirmish. The Natalians believed that the NP would use the Coloured Franchise as a steppingstone to consolidate control over the country before launching an attack on the status of English and finally push for a Republic. The resulting tussle for control of the Torch fragmented the veteran community. The UP strenuously opposed both the SL, and at times Kane-Berman attempted to plunge the Torch with the growing multi-racial discourse. The UP depended on Sailor



Malan and other members of the national leadership and Oppenheimer's discrete financial support to strong-arm the Torch.

However, the demise of the Torch showed that the ex-serviceman identity and the accompanying anti-fascist rhetoric had a powerful mass appeal but failed to provide a sufficiently coherent political programme to sustain unified political action. The differences in cultural backgrounds, military experience and political views that emerged under continual nationalist political pressure soon made a unified ex-serviceman platform untenable. The collapse of the Torch thus marked an end to the ex-serviceman identity as a coherent political identity. The next chapter deals with how the ex-servicemen repositioned themselves in parliamentary and extra-parliamentary politics in response to their inability to appeal to a politicised ex-serviceman identity.

## CHAPTER 5:

### EX-SERVICEMEN IN POLITICS 1953-1961

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#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

As argued in the previous chapter, the United Party (UP), the Springbok Legion (SL) and the Torch Commando (the Torch) had mobilised ex-servicemen, as well as an ex-serviceman's identity, in the hope that the wartime idealism and the anti-fascist rhetoric of the war would animate an 'ex-servicemen's electoral bloc' against the National Party (NP) in the 1953 elections. However, the mass appeal of the ex-serviceman identity had attracted a constituency with divergent political agendas. The UP's machinations to control the ex-serviceman's political voice hindered the coordination of opposition to the NP. First, the SL and then the Torch fell afoul of the UP's unwillingness to formulate a coherent progressive response to the NP's racial and Republican ambitions. The UP's angst at engaging with extra-parliamentary movements, or taking part in extra-parliamentary activities, meant that whenever their ex-serviceman allies, in the form of the SL or Torch, advocated engagement with multi-racial partners, the UP was swift to suppress the idea. First, the UP engineered the ejection of the SL from the Torch, and then twice the UP censured Louis Kane-Berman for suggesting that the ex-servicemen would support a national stay-away in solidarity with the Defiance campaign in 1952 and again in protest against the Criminal Laws Amendment Bill and the Public Safety Bill in 1953. The Torch in Natal was also distrustful of Douglas Mitchell, the UP's provincial leader in Natal. For them, the UP's inability to protect the Coloured franchise heralded the UP's ineffectiveness and ultimate failure in the face of the NP's drive towards a Republic. These divisions indicate that the war had not consistently liberalised the ex-servicemen.

The UP's inability to win the 1953 elections, despite the herculean effort of ex-servicemen, meant that the ex-servicemen perceived the UP as a meddling and ungrateful partner. The Torch, as an extra-parliamentary mass movement, had initially navigated the shoals of public opinion by appealing to the ideals and sacrifices of the war. However, by sustaining an ambiguous political agenda, the Republican issue and the Coloured franchise became entangled. British Loyalists soon presented their case in the language of non-racial liberalism. Chapter 4 showed how the Torch's leadership battled to sway the UP away from contesting politics on the terms of the NP, towards a more principled approach. By the time the Torch leadership realised that the UP was both unable and unwilling to capitalise on the mass movement that had developed, the Torch had become overly dependent on UP-aligned, financial sponsors to navigate an independent course. Even if the Torch had been financially self-sustaining, the UP remained the only viable parliamentary opposition party. Thus, the liberal leadership cadre's inability to influence the UP towards a more progressive stance meant that their brief foray into politics had failed.

As noted in the previous chapter, from 1948 to 1953, veteran political organisations played a large part in swaying political parties away from authoritarianism. However, the appeal of the ex-serviceman identity as a coherent political force faded after the SL disbanded and the Torch collapsed in 1953. Since ex-servicemen politicians lacked access to such organisations they faced the arduous task of constructing new support bases through other means. With few alternatives, the select ex-servicemen had to trade their social capital of personal loyalties and principles that they had accumulated since before the war to the present.

This chapter tracks the transition from the politics of mass ex-serviceman identity to the role of individual veterans in politics. The chapter covers the period from 1953 until 1961. Within the period, two parliamentary elections took place: in 1953 and 1958. The discussion covers the ex-servicemen's participation in each election and then discusses how each election influenced parliamentary and extra-parliamentary politics.

## 5.2 ELECTION DEFEAT AND THE SPLIT IN THE WHITE OPPOSITION

### 5.2.1 The 1953 general election

As discussed in the previous chapter, the UP and Labour Party (LP) partnered with the Torch to fight the general elections on 15 April 1953 as a United Democratic Front (the Front). The Front provided an injection of new members and parliamentary candidates for the UP and LP. The overlap of purpose between the Torch and the parliamentary opposition parties, meant that Torchmen soon became directly involved in party politics. For Colin Eglin there was a natural synergy between the liberal faction of the UP and the Torch:

I belonged to a group of younger supporters of the UP, most of whom had been active in the Torch Commando, who acted as a pressure group in an attempt to make the party organisation more effective and to persuade the Cape Peninsula wing to take a liberal view on local issues.<sup>1085</sup>

The Torch had energised younger ex-servicemen to join the UP. Raw recalls that “Fifty-three was the first time that we got a real injection of – on any scale, of younger people coming in. ...[I]t was fifty-three that you really got the intake of younger people.”<sup>1086</sup>

The number of ex-servicemen in the sample group that stood in the 1953 parliamentary elections, with an indication of their previous military experience, is shown in Table 5.1. Thirty-seven ex-servicemen contested parliamentary seats, 17 of whom won in their constituencies. Despite the views of Kane-Berman, that Torch leaders should not stand in the election, several prominent

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<sup>1085</sup> Eglin, *Crossing the Borders of Power*, 54.

<sup>1086</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2242 Hackland, ‘Interview with Vause Raw by B Hackland’, 3.

Torchmen did so.<sup>1087</sup> Of the sample group, ten Torchmen stood for election. However, only Noël McMillan kept his seat.

**Table 5.1: Background of ex-servicemen in the 1953 general elections and 11th Parliament 1953-1958 (n=153)**<sup>1088</sup>

	Ex-servicemen	Former Torchmen	War experience of ex-servicemen			
			Africa Star	Italy Star	POW	AES
<b>Successful MP</b>	17	1	8	3	2	3
<b>Candidates</b>	20	10	8	5	1	2
<b>By-elections and native representatives</b>	2	1	2	1		
<b>Total</b>	39	12	18	9	3	5

Of the 17 Members of Parliament (MP), four were new to Parliament, namely Jan Steytler (UP), Prof Sakkies Fourie (UP), Christopher Starke (UP), and Brian Bunting (Independent/communist). The appointment of the so-called 'Native Representatives', and the by-election results, brought the total of ex-servicemen in the 11<sup>th</sup> Parliament (1953 to 1958) to 19. In this regard, Walter Stanford (Liberal Party (LPSA) and Len Lee-Warden (Independent) entered Parliament in 1955 as 'Native Representatives'. Stanford had been a fighter pilot in the war and was the grandson of Sir Walter Stanford. Bunting was expelled from Parliament in 1954 for being a communist, and Bernard Friedman resigned from Parliament in 1954.<sup>1089</sup> In terms of the military experience of the MPs, there were ten Africa Star and four Italy Star recipients, two former POWs and three who had served in the Army Education Scheme (AES). When including the 20 unsuccessful candidates, the military experience of the 39, predominantly remained in the African theatre, with 18 recipients of the Africa Star and nine of the Italy Star. Three were former prisoners of war, and five had served in the AES. The predominance of veterans from the African campaign suggests that the younger soldiers who had volunteered to fight in Italy had not yet emerged in parliamentary politics.

Table 5.2 compares the military ranks held by the members of the 10<sup>th</sup> and the 11<sup>th</sup> Parliaments. In both parliamentary sittings, demobilised junior officers accounted for the majority of ex-servicemen in Parliament. This trend remained consistent for unsuccessful candidates, suggesting that the parliamentarians had an understanding of the military based primarily on combat experience and not necessarily in the military administration.

<sup>1087</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2077, Kane-Berman, 'The Torch Commando. Its Beginning and End', 22.

<sup>1088</sup> Table Compiled by Author from DOD Archive, PA; UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information, Subject File 158 (Part 1), War Veterans Torch Commando; UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information, Subject File 158 (Part 2), War Veterans Torch Commando; UNISA-UP Archive, Central Head Office, File 61 62 (part 2); Subject File 158 (Part 1), War Veterans Torch Commando.

<sup>1089</sup> Graaff, *Div Looks Back*, 144; Eglin, *Crossing the Borders of Power*, 55.

**Table 5.2: Military ranks of ex-Servicemen in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Parliaments (n=153)** <sup>1090</sup>

	10 <sup>th</sup> Parliament 1948-1952	11 <sup>th</sup> Parliament 1953-1958	Unsuccessful candidates 1953 Elections
Lieutenant General	-	-	1
Colonel	2	2	1
Lieutenant Colonel	1	1	-
Major	2	2	4
Captain	5	6	2
Lieutenant	3	3	10
Unknown	1	1	-
Warrant Officer	-	-	1
Sergeant	1	1	-
Corporal	-	2	1
Total	15	19	21

In terms of language, a fascinating tendency occurred during the 1953 elections. The UP, appealing to its Afrikaner constituency, fielded an almost equal number of English and Afrikaans-speaking ex-servicemen as candidates, as indicated in Table 5.3. However, this barely made a difference in the language representation among ex-servicemen in Parliament which remained dominantly English-speaking. Clearly, the military service of the *bloed-sappe* did not impress the Afrikaner voter in the 1953 elections. The UP's attempt to win back the *platteland* did not succeed.

**Table 5.3: Language of ex-servicemen in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Parliament (n=153)** <sup>1091</sup>

	10 <sup>th</sup> Parliament 1948-1952	11 <sup>th</sup> Parliament 1953-1958	Unsuccessful candidates in the 1953 Elections
Afrikaans-speaking	1	3	12
English-speaking	10	13	8
Jewish	4	3	1
Total	15	19	21

The Torchmen's inability to translate political populism into election victory, even at the personal level, as indicated in Table 5.1, left the Torch's election efforts discredited and the Front with the UP and LP in tatters. On the back of disappointing election results, the Front partners had to face difficult recriminations and chart a path as a weakened opposition in Parliament.

### 5.2.2 Effect of the 1953 elections on veteran political organisations

The increase of ex-servicemen in the parliamentary caucus was marginal. The Front's efforts had failed to provide the UP with victory, or even strengthen the UPs position in Parliament. Even before the 1953 elections, when the Torch argued that the invigorated UP electoral machine would deliver victory, Sir de Villiers Graaff had remained doubtful. When the Torch raised the possibility of Torch

<sup>1090</sup> Table compiled by Author from *South African Who's Who 1948-1977*; DOD Archive, PA.

<sup>1091</sup> Table compiled by Author from *South African Who's Who 1948-1977*; DOD Archive, PA.

representation in a post-election cabinet, Graaff dismissed the idea as entirely academic as he believed that the UP and the Front had no chance of winning the elections.<sup>1092</sup> The UP fixation on the Afrikaans vote, and a non-committal approach to the race issue, provided the electorate with very little reason to support them. Julius Lewin, a prominent South African academic, argued before the elections:

If the UP can win the major share of the thirty marginal seats, nearly all in urban and peri-urban areas, it can win its way back into office. To do this it must stop stealing the Nationalists' clothes in order to dress itself up to look like a mealie farmer.<sup>1093</sup>

Gillie Ford captured the UP's dilemma when he accused the party of being little more than "apartheid enunciated with honey in the voice".<sup>1094</sup> The UP's lack of viable, unambiguous, policy alternatives left it helpless against the rise of Afrikaner nationalism and the appeal of apartheid.<sup>1095</sup>

Disillusioned with the UP's election performance, Kane-Berman, who maintained close links with liberal groups and the federalists, lucidly described the options open to those wanting to oppose the Nationalists: "We [have] two instruments, 1. Natal and 2. The Non-European".<sup>1096</sup> As the Torch imploded after the Front's failure at the polls, factions in the Torch pursued both options. The Torch in Natal opted to emphasise the dangers of the NP declaring Republic, and the liberals in the Torch faced the choice between courting non-racial politics and remaining a ginger group within the UP.

Table 5.4 highlights the overlap between the Torch and the three political parties that profited from the end of the Torch. Interestingly, the LPSA attracted a higher proportion of the NCOs in the group, with the majority of the officers remaining in the UP. The table shows that although the Torch aminated ex-servicemen politically, the majority remained wedded to the politically established UP, even after the Torch had disbanded.

**Table 5.4: Torchmen's membership of political parties after the dissolution of the Torch (n=153)<sup>1097</sup>**

	Officer	NCO	Total
<b>LPSA</b>	2	5	7
<b>UFP</b>	8	3	11
<b>UP</b>	22	1	23

<sup>1092</sup> White, 'The United Party and the 1953 General Election', 76.

<sup>1093</sup> Walker, *Sailor Malan. A Biography*, 176.

<sup>1094</sup> Roos, *Ordinary Springboks*, 126.

<sup>1095</sup> Eglin, *Crossing the Borders of Power*, 51.

<sup>1096</sup> Everatt, *The Origins of Non-Racialism*, 143.

<sup>1097</sup> Table created by Author from: *Who is Who in Southern Africa 1948-1977*; UNISA-UP Archive, Central Head Office File 61 62 (Part 2) War Veteran Torch Commando; UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information file 158 (Part 1) War Veteran Torch Commando; UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information file 158 (Part 2) War Veteran Torch Commando; DOD Archive, PA; Vigne, *Liberals Against Apartheid*, 233-235; Reid, 'The Federal Party, 1953-1962'.



Thus, with the end of the Torch in September 1953, Torchmen emerged in various political parties, as discussed next.

### 5.2.2.1 The Torch in Natal and the Union Federal Party

The UP's election defeat brought the animosity between the Torch's Natal regions and the UP to the fore. Directly after the election, most senior Torch leaders from Natal were disillusioned and suspicious of the UP. This included Torch leaders like Ford, James Chutter, Roger Brickhill, Robert Hughes-Mason, Arthur Selby, James Durrant and William Hamilton.<sup>1098</sup> As Brian Reid stated, "with the end of the election campaign, the member organisations of the United Democratic Front resumed their liberty of action" from before the build up to the elections.<sup>1099</sup>

The Torch in Natal used the Torch National Executive Committee (NEC) Meeting on 8 May 1953 to successfully argue that if the Torch was to remain until "sane, democratic government was once more restored", then the Torch should continue. Flushed with the success of the NEC meeting, Ford announced the imminent launching of the UFP and called for sponsors.<sup>1100</sup> The surprise move split the national executive roughly in half with 19 of the 32 members sponsoring the new party. An additional three non-executive members agreed to be sponsors, bringing the number of sponsors to 22, of which 12 were from the Transvaal, two from the Cape and the remainder from Natal. Ironically, most of the sponsors had not committed themselves to future actions or positions and played no further role in the party. John Wilson later conceded that he "... never really had anything to do with the UFP".<sup>1101</sup> CS Keary claimed that he signed the statement out of wartime loyalty to Ford.<sup>1102</sup> Bill Conradie sponsored and joined the party, since at the time he perceived it as the only party that was willing to oppose the Nationalists' totalitarian tendencies.<sup>1103</sup>

The Union Federal Party's (UFP) formal formation on 10 May 1953 further precipitated the end of the Torch. This was partially due to the tension between UP sympathisers and UFP supporters which led to the resignation of prominent members of the Torch. At the 2<sup>nd</sup> National Congress of the Torch between 12 and 13 June 1953, a narrow vote (423 to 399 votes) defeated an immediate call to fold up the Torch. The 3<sup>rd</sup> National Congress of the Torch in East London later that year between 25 and 26 September 1953 placed the Torch under "care and maintenance". After that the Torch finally faded from the political arena, despite John Lang's attempts two years later in 1955 to bring life back to the Torch.<sup>1104</sup>

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<sup>1098</sup> Reid, 'The Federal Party, 1953-1962', 39.

<sup>1099</sup> Reid, 39.

<sup>1100</sup> Reid, 49–50.

<sup>1101</sup> Reid, 52.

<sup>1102</sup> Reid, 51.

<sup>1103</sup> Reid, 149 footnote 3.

<sup>1104</sup> Reid, 61–63.

The UFP, born out of the Torch, emulated the Torch's position regarding the South African constitution and race relations. The South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) traces the legacy of the UFP position back to the constitutional issues that the Torch had raised previously:

[The UFP's] concern over the preservation of the constitution and the entrenched clause dealing with equal language rights for English and Afrikaans led the Party to consider the other entrenched clause dealing with non-European voting rights, and to formulate a policy to promote racial harmony.<sup>1105</sup>

However, the UFP found reconciling White interests with universal franchise problematic. As a compromise, the party supported the concept of a qualified franchise for all races, but, in order to protect the White minority, this would occur only "over a considerable period of years...[and] ... subject to safeguards".<sup>1106</sup>

The UFP's policies failed to attract White support at the polls, even in their perceived stronghold of Natal. In the party's first election experience, Arthur Martin stood in the Berea constituency in the 1953 by-elections and lost.<sup>1107</sup> Further blows followed. Their defeat in the 1954 provincial election came as a shattering blow. Not only did they secure just 20.4 per cent of the vote, but the UFP also failed to secure a single seat. Brickhill proved to be the most successful of their candidates, securing 38.5 per cent of the vote in the Berea constituency.<sup>1108</sup> The UFP thus failed even in their stronghold Province.

The UFP failed in its appeal to ex-servicemen. Moreover, the UFP's drift from a liberal racial position to sympathising with rising British 'Jingoism', in response to the NP plans to form a Republic, alienated the liberal ex-servicemen that were instrumental in forming the party.<sup>1109</sup> Ford and Brickhill, disillusioned by their inability to stem NP Republicanism and unable to shoulder the financial cost of politics, emigrated to Rhodesia.<sup>1110</sup> Conradie resigned, claiming that it had become clear to him that the party was more concerned about English-speaking interests than attempting to halt the Nationalists.<sup>1111</sup> In the subsequent by-elections in East London in 1957, the provincial by-election in Hospital Constituency in Johannesburg, in 1958 and the 1958 provincial elections, the UFP failed to secure any success. Their swan song was a campaign headed by Hughes-Mason and Martin against the Republican referendum of 5 October 1960 in Natal. By 1962, the party ceased to function.<sup>1112</sup>

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<sup>1105</sup> SAIRR, *South African Institute of Race Relations Survey 1953-1954* (Johannesburg: SAIRR, 1954), 6.

<sup>1106</sup> SAIRR, *South African Institute of Race Relations Survey: 1952-1953* (Johannesburg: SAIRR, 1953), 6.  
<sup>1107</sup> Reid, 'The Federal Party, 1953-1962', 92.

<sup>1108</sup> Reid, 117-18.

<sup>1109</sup> Reid, 99-100, 149.

<sup>1110</sup> Reid, 149 footnote 3.

<sup>1111</sup> Reid, 135 footnote 67.

<sup>1112</sup> Reid, 217.

### 5.2.2.2 Liberal Party

The second party to emerge from the UP's election defeat in 1948 was the LPSA. As indicated in Table 5.4, several Torchmen played a prominent part in the LPSA's formation, which this section discusses. The UP, in the post-war years, gave liberally-minded ex-servicemen access to White politics. Many believed that a robust liberal representation within the UP would edge the UP towards more progressive policymaking. Loyalty to Jan Hofmeyr kept many liberals from forming a new party, and ensured that they worked within UP structures.<sup>1113</sup> When Hofmeyr died in 1948, these liberals formed the 'Hofmeyr Society' as a pressure group within the UP.<sup>1114</sup> In 1950, Rupert Pilkington-Jordan, in order to organise the liberal influence in the UP,<sup>1115</sup> drew up a manifesto calling for the abolition of the colour bar and the implementation of 'civilised rights to civilised men'. Sir Ernest Oppenheimer attempted to quash the manifesto, which he believed could damage the UP and ironically, held a meeting which brought the liberal group closer together.<sup>1116</sup>

Canvassing for the establishment of a liberal group also occurred in Johannesburg. Piet Beyleveld recalls how Jock Isacowitz canvassed the left for support:

[b]efore the formation of the Liberal Party (LP[SA]) there was what they I think called the Liberal League or Liberal Association- it was very much Jock Isacowitz's idea, and he phoned me on one occasion and he told me his idea of a Liberal Association and asked me whether I would be prepared to discuss it, and I said yes I would.<sup>1117</sup>

In January 1952, a small group of liberals met in Cape Town to work on a programme of principles.<sup>1118</sup> In January 1953, this group formalised itself as the South African Liberal Association (SALA) which later evolved into the LPSA.<sup>1119</sup> Among its initial members, were committed liberals like Eglin.<sup>1120</sup> The formation of SALA was partially in response to the Darragh Hall meeting in November 1952 as well as the formation of the more radical Congress of Democrats (COD) in Johannesburg in January 1953.<sup>1121</sup> The defeat of the UP, and the imminent formation of the UFP, pressured liberals to form a new party. Leslie Rubin, a prominent member of the Torch, had foreknowledge of the forming of the UFP and pushed for an early launch of the LPSA to pre-empt this.<sup>1122</sup> Since the UFP and LPSA appealed to the same sector of the population, there would be an

<sup>1113</sup> Cardo, 'Fighting a Worse Imperialism', 160.

<sup>1114</sup> Eglin, *Crossing the Borders of Power*, 51.

<sup>1115</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2242 Hackland, 'Interview with Dr Jan Steytler by B Hackland', 6.

<sup>1116</sup> White, 'The South African Parliamentary Opposition, 1948-1953', 403.

<sup>1117</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2521 aa, David Everatt Papers, 'Interview with Piet Beyleveld by David Everatt', 2.

<sup>1118</sup> Moffatt, 'From 'Conscience Politics' to the Battlefields of Political Activism', 42.

<sup>1119</sup> FA Mouton, 'Only a Liberal of High-Sounding Words?' Margaret Ballinger's Liberalism and Her Relationship with South African Liberals, 1926-1968', *Kleio*, 33, no. 1 (2007), 54.

<sup>1120</sup> Mouton, *Iron in the Soul*, 130.

<sup>1121</sup> Everatt, *The Origins of Non-Racialism*, 174.

<sup>1122</sup> APC, OHP, 'Interview with Dr Peter Brown conducted by Prof Norman Bromberger in Pietermaritzburg, 21 August 1995'.

inevitable entanglement of interests and a contest to draw members from the same interest group. Both Liberal and Federalist factions in Johannesburg met at the Lewin's home on 9 May 1953, where Lewin later noted that the UFP "came to birth in our lounge the night our own liberal [Ballinger] group broke up".<sup>1123</sup>

Furthermore, the UP's Cape leader, Graaff, had become antagonistic towards the liberals in the party and gave the impression that he would "prefer that his UP was not perceived to be on the left of the South African political spectrum".<sup>1124</sup> Within the UP the liberals were divided on the need for a new party. Between 8 and 9 May 1953, the SALA met in Cape Town to discuss the formation of a new party. The Transvaal delegation, led by Isacowitz, was eager to form a new party.<sup>1125</sup> The Natal delegation, however, was not convinced and Geoffrey Durrant eventually chose to join the UFP.<sup>1126</sup> Eglin was one of the UP liberals that maintained that reform could liberalise the UP from within and thus he made the decision not to join the new party.<sup>1127</sup> Despite reservations from Margret Ballinger and others, Rubin, the vice-chairperson of the SALA, forced the issue by releasing a statement to the media before the meeting, in which he announced the formation of the new party.<sup>1128</sup>

Table 5.5 shows the members of the sample group who joined the LPSA. The 17 ex-servicemen had a more even spread of war experience than in other political groupings, with 12 Africa Stars and 10 Italy Stars. Four were members of the AES, and two were former Prisoners of War (POWs).

**Table 5.5: Military experience of ex-servicemen in the Liberal Party (n=153)<sup>1129</sup>**

Rank	Ex-servicemen in the sample	Military experience of ex-servicemen				
		AES	POW	Africa Star	Italy Star	Africa and Italy Star
<b>Lieutenant Colonel</b>	2	1	-	2	1	1
<b>Major</b>	1	-	-	1	1	1
<b>Captain</b>	1	1	-	1	-	-
<b>Lieutenant</b>	3	2	-	2	1	1
<b>Warrant Officers</b>	1	-	-	1	-	-
<b>Staff Sergeant</b>	1	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Corporal</b>	1	-	1	1	1	1
<b>Private</b>	7	-	1	4	6	3
<b>Unknown</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	17	4	2	12	10	7

<sup>1123</sup> Vigne, *Liberals Against Apartheid*, 21–22.

<sup>1124</sup> Eglin, *Crossing the Borders of Power*, 53.

<sup>1125</sup> Moffatt, 'From 'Conscience Politics' to the Battlefields of Political Activism', 49.

<sup>1126</sup> APC, OHP, 'Interview with Dr Peter Brown conducted by Prof Norman Bromberger in Pietermaritzburg, 21 August 1995'.

<sup>1127</sup> Eglin, *Crossing the Borders of Power*, 53; Mouton, *Iron in the Soul*, 130.

<sup>1128</sup> Mouton, 'Only a Liberal of High-Sounding Words?', 54.

<sup>1129</sup> Table compiled by Author from *South African Who's Who 1948-1977*; DOD Archive, PA.

The almost parity in experience between African and Italian war experience suggests that the Italian campaign had had a liberalising effect on the ex-servicemen that served there and that a younger group of ex-servicemen had entered into politics who were attracted to the policies of the LPSA. Table 5.6 reflects the age distribution of ex-servicemen in the LPSA. The age distribution also coincides with the membership of the AES and rank. The four oldest, Leo Marquard (1897), Gerald Gordon (1909), Leo Kuper (1908) and Rubin (1909) were not only AES officers but also the only commissioned officers who had established careers before joining up in 1939/40. Their involvement within the AES provided the LPSA with a lineage stretching back to an earlier liberal tradition. The presence of both AES officers and University of Natal academics<sup>1130</sup> in the LPSA suggests a continuity in South African Liberalism that links Ernst Malherbe, as the founder of the AES and Rector of Natal University, to the LPSA. In terms of education and occupation, the majority were involved in middle to upper-class professions and academia, which affirms Malherbe's observation that education had a liberalising effect.<sup>1131</sup>

**Table 5.6: Date of birth of ex-servicemen in the Liberal Party (n=153)<sup>1132</sup>**

	1893- 1897	1898- 1902	1903- 1907	1908- 1912	1913- 1917	1918- 1922	1923- 1927	Total
Count	1	-	-	3	6	2	5	17

From the outset, the LPSA was not a homogenous group. They shared the political goal of opposing apartheid and kept their divergent political views from splitting the party.<sup>1133</sup> The most obvious tension was between the older, moderate, Cape Liberals and the younger radical liberals, led by Isacowitz, from the Transvaal. In Natal, ex-serviceman Peter Brown's efforts led to the formation of a liberal discussion group around June 1952, which attracted a non-racial membership and several ex-servicemen<sup>1134</sup> who were also staff members at the University of Natal.<sup>1135</sup> Thus, the Natal group often found themselves in the centre of a more conservative Cape and a radical Transvaal group.<sup>1136</sup>

<sup>1130</sup> Isacowitz, *Telling People What They Do Not Want to Hear*, 331.

<sup>1131</sup> G Friedman, 'The late Gerald Gordon QC', *Consultus* (November 1998), 117-118. Guest, *Stella Aurorae Volume 1*, 349, 351; B Guest, *Stella Aurorae: The History of a South African University Volume 2, University of Natal (1949-1976)* (Pietermaritzburg: Natal Society Foundation, 2017), 43, 66, 85, 205; G Shaw, 'Walter Stanford A Liberal voice in apartheid South Africa'. Available: <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2004/apr/17/guardianobituaries.southafrica>. [Accessed on 2020]; Hain, *Ad and Wal*, 42; G Shaw, 'Leslie Rubin'. Available: <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2002/apr/16/guardianobituaries1>. [Accessed on 6 October 2020]; Dubow, 'Scientism, Social Research and the Limits of 'South Africanism'', 130; DOD Archive, PA, Personnel Service File JD Wilson 32489.

<sup>1132</sup> Table compiled by Author from *South African Who's Who 1948-1977*; DOD Archive, PA.

<sup>1133</sup> Moffatt, 'From 'Conscience Politics' to the Battlefields of Political Activism', 55.

<sup>1134</sup> Ex-servicemen in this group included Peter Brown, Hans Meidner, Leo Kuper, and Ken Hill.

<sup>1135</sup> Moffatt, 'From 'Conscience Politics' to the Battlefields of Political Activism', 42.

<sup>1136</sup> Moffatt, 'From 'Conscience Politics' to the Battlefields of Political Activism', 56.

Where the Cape Liberals argued for a qualified franchise which had to be earned, the Transvaal group argued that voting was a basic right.<sup>1137</sup>

The Transvaal liberals, in closer contact with the radicals of the SL, were aware that the qualified franchise limited the party's appeal to the Black population.<sup>1138</sup> Hans Meidner, a former POW and student leader from Natal, and Isacowitz from the Transvaal, were two of the more vocal ex-servicemen in the radical camp.<sup>1139</sup> The 1<sup>st</sup> Liberal Party conference in June 1953, accepted the principle of the qualified franchise, a decision that the younger, more radical members resisted. Only in 1960 did the principle of universal franchise prevail, which coincided with many of the more moderate Cape Liberals who had supported qualified franchise, such as Stanford and Gordon, leaving the party.<sup>1140</sup>

In 1958, the LPSA's dismal performance in the parliamentary elections, where all three Liberal candidates lost, opened the way for the younger ex-servicemen to gain control over the party. Ex-servicemen Brown and Kuper were elected as the national chairman and vice-chairman respectively, and Meidner assumed chairmanship of the Natal province from Brown. Isacowitz maintained the chairmanship of the Transvaal province. In April 1959, Meidner and Isacowitz accepted the post of co-vice-chairmen of the party.<sup>1141</sup> The more radical liberals thereby secured a stronger hold over the policy direction of the party. Under Brown's leadership, the party realised the futility of parliamentary politics and adopted a more active stance towards extra-parliamentary politics.<sup>1142</sup> In 1959, Brown bluntly stated that he believes that:

The Parliamentary system in South Africa is dead, and it is dead because the Nationalists have killed it. They continue to go through the democratic motions because it gives the stamp of respectability to their policies and deludes a diminishing number of their opponents, at home and abroad, into thinking that democracy functions here.<sup>1143</sup>

The LPSA's departure from parliamentary politics freed it from being relevant to the White electorate. Instead it cooperated with other extra-parliamentary organisations and became directly involved in protests and calls for boycotts.<sup>1144</sup>

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<sup>1137</sup> Mouton, 'Only a Liberal of High-Sounding Words?', 55; Isacowitz, *Telling People What They Do Not Want to Hear*, 337.

<sup>1138</sup> Mouton, 'Only a Liberal of High-Sounding Words?', 55; Isacowitz, *Telling People What They Do Not Want to Hear*, 337.

<sup>1139</sup> Du Toit, 'The National Committee for Liberation ('ARM') 1960-1964: Sabotage and the Question of the Ideological Subject', 41.

<sup>1140</sup> Mouton, 'Only a Liberal of High-Sounding Words?', 56-58; SAIRR, 'South African Institute of Race Relations Survey 1959-1960' (Johannesburg: SAIRR, 1960), 12.

<sup>1141</sup> Isacowitz, *Telling People What They Do Not Want to Hear*, 409.

<sup>1142</sup> Moffatt, 'From 'Conscience Politics' to the Battlefields of Political Activism', 88, 104; Isacowitz, *Telling People What They Do Not Want to Hear*, 335.

<sup>1143</sup> Isacowitz, *Telling People What They Do Not Want to Hear*, 404.

<sup>1144</sup> Du Toit, 'The National Committee for Liberation ('ARM') 1960-1964', 43; Moffatt, 'From 'Conscience Politics' to the Battlefields of Political Activism', 110.



The LPSA, with its non-racial membership, was an anomaly in South African politics at the time.<sup>1145</sup> Their entry into non-racial politics also placed the party in conflict with the radicals who positioned themselves as the White representation of the Congress of the People (COP). If the LPSA's previous non-racial positions had not concerned the government, its new position placed it in direct conflict with the nationalist government.

### 5.3 COUNCIL OF DEMOCRATS AND THE END OF THE SPRINGBOK LEGION

As indicated in Chapter 4, the expulsion of the SL from the Torch in 1951, coupled with the earlier dissolution of the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) in 1950 left many White radicals politically stranded. These radicals used the remnants of the SL to regroup. Thus, by 1952, the SL had been repositioned. No longer simply an ex-servicemen's interest group, the SL used wartime rhetoric to broaden the understanding of fascism to include racism and thereby frame the NP as fascist. Under the leadership of Guy Routh, the SL began building bridges with the Black liberation movements and supported multi-racial initiatives against the Nationalists.<sup>1146</sup> The SL's open support for the Defiance campaign on 6 April 1952, won over the African National Congress (ANC) and allowed the SL to position itself within the liberation struggle.<sup>1147</sup>

In November 1952, on the back of inter-racial solidarity built during the Defiance campaign, the ANC and the South African Indian Congress (SAIC) called a meeting to consolidate White partnership within the Congress movement.<sup>1148</sup> Two broad groups were in the audience, the SL's radical group, and a loose collection of liberals and progressives.<sup>1149</sup> The radicals were eager to participate in order to secure an entry point into liberation politics.<sup>1150</sup> The still uncoordinated liberals had a more cautious approach which laid bare the divisions between the liberal and radical Whites. The radicals used their participation in the meeting at the Darragh Hall in November 1952 to strength the radicals' position within the COP and the struggle for Black liberation.<sup>1151</sup>

The radicals entered the Darragh Hall meeting with a distinct advantage over other interested White groupings. Their control over the SL had created the illusion that they negotiated on behalf of the White population.<sup>1152</sup> The radicals control over a rudimentary organisation from which to construct a White congress partner, provided them with better leverage than that of individual radicals or liberals. Cecil Williams and Jack Hodgson entered into discussions with the SAIC and ANC, accepting that the White radical's role in the congress movement would be to mobilise opinion in the White

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<sup>1145</sup> SAIRR, *South African Institute of Race Relations Survey: 1952-1953*, 5.

<sup>1146</sup> Roos, *Ordinary Springboks*, 166.

<sup>1147</sup> Lazerson, *Against the Tide*, 69; Roos, *Ordinary Springboks, 1939-1961*, 169.

<sup>1148</sup> Lazerson, *Against the Tide*, 69.

<sup>1149</sup> L Bernstein, *Memory Against Forgetting*, 121.

<sup>1150</sup> Lazerson, *Against the Tide*, 69.

<sup>1151</sup> Everatt, *The Origins of Non-Racialism*, 46.

<sup>1152</sup> Everatt, *The Origins of Non-Racialism*, 99, 109–10; Lazerson, *Against the Tide*, 69.

population.<sup>1153</sup> Although the radicals had an initial organisational advantage, there were some, such as Routh, who believed that the liberals should have been allowed to organise on similar lines.<sup>1154</sup>

The liberals, not yet formally organised as a party, failed to attend the meeting in significant numbers. Some had boycotted the meeting in protest over the inclusion of “known communists”, based on their previous associations, and others harboured policy differences with the radical left.<sup>1155</sup> Both radicals and liberals preferred an all-in, non-racial organisation and were wary of constructing the movement along racial lines.<sup>1156</sup> The communists feared that the emphasis on racial consciousness would negate the idea of non-racial class unity, whereas the liberals feared the loss of individualism within racially-conscious nationalist movements.<sup>1157</sup> In the end, the radicals were more willing to compromise on their principles. As a former member of the CPSA, Isacowitz had also warned that the communists, with their more flexible agenda, would use the meeting to outmanoeuvre the liberals. He cautioned the liberal groups against getting too involved.<sup>1158</sup> Ernie Wentzel, a liberal and friend of Isacowitz, related how Isacowitz identified the communist agenda during the Darragh Hall meeting:

Isacowitz said that when discussions started to take place, he noticed that various colleagues of his from the Communist Party and Springbok Legion were not sitting together as one would normally imagine friends would do, but were spread out at various places throughout the hall. By their interventions in the meeting, it was quite clear to him, as a former member of the Communist Party, that they were working according to a preconceived pattern and that people, although not sitting together with one another, had got together before the meeting and decide on the tactics to be adopted. Isacowitz told me [Wentzel] that the moment he saw this happen, he realised that the CD [Congress of Democrats] would be a straight Communist organization, and under their control, and there would be no place in the organization for Liberals.<sup>1159</sup>

Despite the reservations of the liberals, several meetings occurred between the liberals and the radicals to form a single White congress movement, but without success.<sup>1160</sup> By January 1953, the Johannesburg radicals formed the COD, while the liberals opted to consolidate the various liberal discussion groups into the SALA.<sup>1161</sup> One of the main points of contention remained the principle of the franchise. The COD argued for universal franchise, and the liberals remained committed to a non-racial but qualified franchise.<sup>1162</sup>

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<sup>1153</sup> Everatt, *The Origins of Non-Racialism*, 111; Lazerson, *Against the Tide*, 69.

<sup>1154</sup> Everatt, *The Origins of Non-Racialism*, 131.

<sup>1155</sup> Lazerson, *Against the Tide*, 69.

<sup>1156</sup> Moffatt, 'From 'Conscience Politics' to the Battlefields of Political Activism', 47, 54.

<sup>1157</sup> D Everatt, 'The Politics of Nonracialism: White Opposition to Apartheid' (PhD Thesis, University of Oxford, 1990), 3.

<sup>1158</sup> Everatt, *The Origins of Non-Racialism*, 46; Isacowitz, *Telling People What They Do Not Want to Hear*, 329.

<sup>1159</sup> Isacowitz, *Telling People What They Do Not Want to Hear*, 329.

<sup>1160</sup> Isacowitz, 380.

<sup>1161</sup> Everatt, *The Origins of Non-Racialism*, 138.

<sup>1162</sup> Moffatt, 'From 'Conscience Politics' to the Battlefields of Political Activism', 53.

The Darragh Hall meeting was a watershed in White resistance to apartheid. Those that were not willing to work within the framework proposed by the ANC found expression in the non-racial LPSA. The SL, which by this stage had been thoroughly infiltrated by named communists, seized the opportunity to consolidate various radical White movements into a singular movement, in partnership with the Congress movement. For Beyleveld, the SL had been instrumental in the formation of the COD in Johannesburg in January 1953 after the Darragh Hall meeting. According to Beyleveld, "...the SL was one of the organisations instrumental in the formation of the Congress of Democrats (COD) I became the president of COD".<sup>1163</sup>

The SL raised funds in support of the formation of the COD, which quickly established 13 branches countrywide and boasted 500 members. By August 1953, the two movements were cooperating on numerous issues. However, Bunting saw the COD as simply a continuation of the SL:

... the people who battled around in the Legion were probably the same people who battled around in the Congress of Democrats, and they had the paper and all the connections and they just carried on, changed its character a little bit, that's all.<sup>1164</sup>

The government, alarmed by the SL's involvement in the establishment of the COD as the White partner in the liberation struggle, increased pressure on the organisation. On 4 June 1953, the Security Police raided the SL's offices in Johannesburg, confiscating records and documents. Banning orders followed; Hodgson was first.<sup>1165</sup> Then, on 28 August 1953, the government also ordered Williams and Alan Lipman to resign from all organisations and banned them from attending any gatherings for two years.<sup>1166</sup>

Despite increased government repression, in October 1953, the COD in Johannesburg, the SL, and the Democratic League of Cape Town formally amalgamated as the South African Congress of Democrats (SACOD).<sup>1167</sup> The role of ex-servicemen, especially legionnaires, in the SACOD, was extensive. At the inaugural conference on 10 and 11 October 1953, Rusty Bernstein, both a legionnaire and a communist, gave the keynote address. Bernstein and Hodgson set the tone of the conference by presenting papers on the situation in the country.<sup>1168</sup> In the election of the committee, ex-servicemen dominated central positions, with Beyleveld as president, Hodgson as secretary, and Lee-Warden as vice-president.<sup>1169</sup> Other ex-servicemen and servicewomen on the national

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<sup>1163</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2521 aa, David Everatt Papers, 'Interview with Piet Beyleveld by David Everatt', 1.

<sup>1164</sup> UWC-Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, RF/6/5, Pinnock Interviews, 'Interview with Brian Bunting by Don Pinnock'. Available: <http://www.ruthfirstpapers.org.uk/>. [Accessed 3 September 2019].

<sup>1165</sup> UWC-Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, RF/6/5, Pinnock Interviews, 'Interview with Rica Hodgson by Don Pinnock'. Available: <http://www.ruthfirstpapers.org.uk/>. [Accessed 7 September 2019].

<sup>1166</sup> Roos, *Ordinary Springboks*, 171.

<sup>1167</sup> Everatt, *The Origins of Non-Racialism*, 116; Roos, *Ordinary Springboks*, 171.

<sup>1168</sup> Everatt, *The Origins of Non-Racialism*, 116.

<sup>1169</sup> Lazerson, *Against the Tide*, 73.

executive included Joe Slovo, Michael Hathorn, and Helen Joseph.<sup>1170</sup> The election of Lee-Warden to the SACOD committee led to the Cape Democratic League, which Lee-Warden led, finally merging with SACOD in November 1953.<sup>1171</sup>

The aims and objectives of the SACOD were formulated in a restricted manner to appeal to Whites who felt politically stranded after the implosion of the Torch the previous month.<sup>1172</sup> The sectional nature of SACOD worried the founders, with Hodgson and Bernstein arguing tortuously that the SACOD was non-racial in membership its purpose was to mobilise the White population against apartheid.<sup>1173</sup> Lee-Warden, was more forthright as he stated, he "... for one, was against joining up with an organisation that was for Whites only, even if the ANC had wanted it that way".<sup>1174</sup> Harold Strachan described the position of the White SACOD within the Congress movement as being akin to being "...like carnivores in a vegetarian restaurant".<sup>1175</sup> Thus, although the White radicals had embraced multi-racial engagement, there were some that still harboured feelings of otherness and saw multi-racialism as a stepsister of apartheid.

With prominent legionnaires in control of the SACOD, the SL quietly dissolved into SACOD and handed over its mouthpiece *Fighting Talk* to SACOD. The SL thus provided continuity between the radical ideals forged in the war and the emerging ideals of national liberation.<sup>1176</sup> However, the presence of 'known communists' on the committees allowed the government to label SACOD as a communist front in the press.<sup>1177</sup> As a result, SACOD suffered intense government oppression. For example, in response to a parliamentary question by Lee-Warden on 2 June 1959, the Justice Minister revealed the banning per year from 1954 until 1959 to Parliament, as shown in Table 5.7<sup>1178</sup>

**Table 5.7: Banning of South Africans between 1954 until 1959**<sup>1179</sup>

Year of banning	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959
Number of banned persons	82	32	15	15	4	9

By 1954 the government had banned a total of 40 of the estimated 250 SACOD members with many SACOD members driven into exile.<sup>1180</sup> Such government suppression hindered the SACOD's ability to find direction.

<sup>1170</sup> Lazerson, 79 endnote 71.

<sup>1171</sup> Lazerson, 74.

<sup>1172</sup> Everatt, *The Origins of Non-Racialism*, 116.

<sup>1173</sup> Bernstein, *Memory Against Forgetting*, 123.

<sup>1174</sup> Everatt, *The Origins of Non-Racialism*, 120.

<sup>1175</sup> H Strachan, *Make a Skyf, Man!* (Johannesburg: Jacana Media, 2004), 261.

<sup>1176</sup> Lazerson, *Against the Tide*, 75; Everatt, *The Origins of Non-Racialism*, 116.

<sup>1177</sup> Everatt, *The Origins of Non-Racialism*, 187-188.

<sup>1178</sup> SAIRR, *South African Institute of Race Relations Survey 1958-1959* (Johannesburg: SAIRR, 1959), 47.

<sup>1179</sup> SAIRR, *South African Institute of Race Relations Survey 1958-1959*, 47.

<sup>1180</sup> Everatt, *The Origins of Non-Racialism*, 183; Roos, *Ordinary Springboks*, 171-72.

In 1954, Professor Zachariah (ZK) Matthews, sensing a lack of policy direction in the Congress movement suggested the convening of a 'Congress of the People' to propose a Freedom Charter as a blueprint for the future South African constitution.<sup>1181</sup> After consideration, all constituents of the Congress movement approved of the idea. The Congress movement established a national working committee to pursue the idea, with Beyleveld and Bernstein representing the SACOD.<sup>1182</sup>

The task of collating the thousands of inputs and distilling them into a coherent whole fell on Bernstein since he was the only professional writer on the national working committee.<sup>1183</sup> The collection of demands and inputs from the entire country provoked people to think and discuss the political situation. The process of consultation and collection became almost more important than the Congress itself. Slovo and others "... considered that process of collecting the demands even more important than the actual congress itself, because it was a sort of catalyst for getting people moving, organising, discussing and thinking ..."<sup>1184</sup> On 25 June 1955, the COP revealed Bernstein's final draft of the Freedom Charter at Kliptown. Bernstein and Slovo, both serving banning orders, were unable to attend officially but observed from adjoining sites.<sup>1185</sup>

The government's reaction to the Freedom Charter was slow. Only in December 1955 did the government react by arresting many of the COP protagonists and indicted them for treason. The indictment included ex-servicemen such as Bernstein, Beyleveld, Hodgson, Joseph, Slovo and Fred Carneson. Schedule B of the indictment cited Lee-warden and Routh.<sup>1186</sup> Although the Treason Trial removed many of the Congress movements' key office bearers, it did not immobilise the movement, but instead concentrated them in one place, thereby facilitating deliberations on structures, tactics and strategy. Bernstein later recounted that the "... Treason Trail arrests could have made matters worse by immobilising key personnel from all levels of the organisation and decimating the ranks of local leadership. Instead they made things better by bringing many leaders together."<sup>1187</sup>

The ejection of the SL from the Torch had freed them to engage in multi-racial politics. The inclusion of the remnants of the SL in the COP movement, in the form of former legionnaires, injected substantial ideological and organisational skills into COP. The legionnaires used the rhetoric of anti-fascism to juxtapose wartime fascism onto increased government oppression, thereby creating a sense of continuity between the war and the anti-apartheid struggle. Furthermore, the government's banning and arrests only served to further strengthen the Legionnaires' equivalence of fascism with the Nationalist regime.

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<sup>1181</sup> Bernstein, *Memory Against Forgetting*, 126.

<sup>1182</sup> Bernstein, 128.

<sup>1183</sup> Bernstein, *Memory Against Forgetting*, 10; Everatt, *The Origins of Non-Racialism*, 220–21.

<sup>1184</sup> SAHA, AL2460, 'Interview with Joe Slovo by J Fredrickse', 12.

<sup>1185</sup> Bernstein, *Memory Against Forgetting*, 139; SAHA, AL2460, 'Interview with Joe Slovo by J Fredrickse.'

<sup>1186</sup> Wits Historical Papers, AD1812, A2. Vol 42, 1956 Treason Trail, 'Regina vs Adams and Others'.

<sup>1187</sup> Bernstein, *Memory Against Forgetting*, 159.

## 5.4 EFFECT OF THE 1953 ELECTIONS ON THE UP

### 5.4.1 The resignation of Strauss

The election defeat and the peeling off of two progressive parties from the UP placed the leadership of Kosie Strauss into doubt. Bitter political infighting debilitated the UP. Fault lines between progressives and conservatives surfaced.<sup>1188</sup> Jan Steytler, a new MP and ex-serviceman, in his first parliamentary caucus meeting on 21 May 1953, rebutted the conservative Blaar Coetzee's proposal for a rapprochement with the NP over the Coloured franchise. His rebuttal accentuated the fault line between the conservatives and progressives:

I said "I have just fought an election that cost me very many thousands of pounds then, on the principle of retaining the Coloureds on the Common Voters' Roll"... I'll be frank, I'd like to get every non-European qualified, on the Common Voters' Roll". Then I was quite surprised at the number of people that supported me, people that I hadn't met before. And they became very close friends of mine, in Parliament, so actually the Progressive Party idea started there at the first caucus meeting.<sup>1189</sup>

During the same meeting, Bailey Bekker, supported by Arthur Barlow, Frank Waring, Abraham Jonker, and Coetzee, openly criticised Strauss for both his management of the election and his position on the Coloured franchise. Strauss attempted to smooth these frictions between him and the Bekker group, but to little avail.<sup>1190</sup> By September 1953, the conservatives' attempts to reach a compromise with the NP on the Coloured franchise had become such an embarrassment to Strauss that he purged the UP of Bekker and his conservative supporters.<sup>1191</sup> However, this expulsion did not assuage the rest of the UP, in-fighting between conservatives and liberals within his party increased and intensified.<sup>1192</sup> Waring joined Reverend Cecil Miles-Cadman as the rare ex-servicemen with Nationalist sympathies, and he eventually became a cabinet minister in 1961.

In 1955, an argument erupted in the UP over whether the party would restore the Coloureds to a Common Voters' roll if they returned to power. A dissenting group of progressive MPs threatened to resign over the issue. This group included Ray Swart, Owen Townley Williams, Ronald Butcher, John Cope and Helen Suzman, Jan Steytler, Sakkies Fourie, and Friedman. An intervention by Harry Oppenheimer and Harry Lawrence persuaded the group to remain in the UP as a liberal pressure group.<sup>1193</sup> However, afterwards, Strauss issued a bland compromise statement, which only further antagonised Friedman, who resigned from the party and Parliament.<sup>1194</sup> By 1956, an ill Strauss, first

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<sup>1188</sup> Eglin, *Crossing the Borders of Power*, 59.

<sup>1189</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2242 Hackland, 'Interview with Dr Jan Steytler by B Hackland', 3.

<sup>1190</sup> Mouton, *Iron in the Soul*, 77.

<sup>1191</sup> Barlow, *That We May Tread Safely*, 105; McConnachie, 'The 1961 General Election in the Republic of South Africa', 24; Mouton, *Iron in the Soul*, 78.

<sup>1192</sup> Mouton, *Iron in the Soul*, 78-79.

<sup>1193</sup> McConnachie, 'The 1961 General Election in the Republic of South Africa', 28-29.

<sup>1194</sup> Mouton, 'A Decent Man, But Not Very Popular', 50; Wits Historical Papers, A2242 Hackland, 'Interview with Dr Jan Steytler by B Hackland'; Mouton, *Iron in the Soul*, 83.



suffering from a glandular infection then hepatitis was worn down from fighting the Coloured franchise issue while simultaneously holding an increasingly fractious party together.<sup>1195</sup> He was finally removed from the head of the UP by its provincial leaders. Graaff reluctantly accepted the leadership position in the UP.<sup>1196</sup> Strauss had little choice but to make way for the charismatic and popular ex-servicemen, despite harbouring serious reservations about Graaff's ability to lead.<sup>1197</sup> After August 1959, Strauss disappeared from public life and retired to the quieter countryside where he became a successful cattle farmer in the vicinity of Klerksdorp.<sup>1198</sup>

#### 5.4.2 Graaff's turn to the right

The charismatic and likeable Graaff was immediately popular within the party and with the press. His presence and lineage appealed to the *bloed-sappe*, the conservative Afrikaans-speaking supporters of the UP.<sup>1199</sup> He believed that his war record and farming credentials would help reinvigorate the UP's Afrikaner support base and win over the platteland, "...[b]ecause of a whole variety of reasons, my background, army service, all that sort of thing, I brought with me the conservative platteland people."<sup>1200</sup>

Thus, Graaff aimed to use some of his accrued social, symbolic and cultural capital in various fields to advance his political goals and career as he had done prior to assuming the UP leadership position. The transference of such capital took various forms. For instance, Colonel Jan Pretorius entered politics after leaving the SAAF and was part of the campaign to 'sell' Graaff to the platteland support base.<sup>1201</sup> Pretorius had been court-martialled in-camera in 1953 on 20 offences under the military disciplinary code.<sup>1202</sup> Ironically, a year before the court-martial, Marais Viljoen (later state president) had written to FC Erasmus suggesting Pretorius for advancement.<sup>1203</sup>

However, despite Graaff's charm and the loyalty he commanded, he was labelled by both friend and foe as a pleasant man with no political acumen.<sup>1204</sup> He adopted the belief that a politician should only

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<sup>1195</sup> Mouton, *Iron in the Soul*, 84.

<sup>1196</sup> Mouton, 'No Prime Minister Could Want a Better Leader of the Opposition', 50.

<sup>1197</sup> Mouton, 'A Decent Man, But Not Very Popular', 15; Eglin, *Crossing the Borders of Power*, 55.

<sup>1198</sup> Mouton, *Iron in the Soul*, 86.

<sup>1199</sup> Mouton, 'No Prime Minister Could Want a Better Leader of the Opposition', 50; Mouton, *Iron in the Soul*, 91.

<sup>1200</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2242 Hackland, 'Interview with Sir De Villiers Graaff by B Hackland', 10.

<sup>1201</sup> UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information, File 35, Biographies 1951-1976, 'Biography of United Party Candidate for General Elections 1958: Jan Daniel Pretorius'.

<sup>1202</sup> Boulter, 'FC Erasmus and the Politics of South African Defence 1948-1959', 61.

<sup>1203</sup> Boulter, 213.

<sup>1204</sup> Mouton, 'No Prime Minister Could Want a Better Leader of the Opposition', 99; Wits Historical Papers A2077, Kane Berman, 'The Torch Commando. Its Beginning and End', 15; McConnachie, 'The 1961 General Election in the Republic of South Africa', 32-33.

articulate the opinion of the electorate, and he advocated policies he thought would be popular with the public.<sup>1205</sup> As Graaff noted:

Members of Parliament are in large measure mouthpieces of the people. They may seek to guide and to educate, but ultimately their task is to render articulate and effective the views of the ordinary citizen.<sup>1206</sup>

On assuming the party's leadership, Graaff formed the opinion that pandering to the progressive faction had weakened the UP and that he "... was still stuck with a number of Labour people who were making such liberal noises, that they were frightening away any sort of hope of getting platteland people."<sup>1207</sup>

He immediately set about distancing the party from liberalism, repositioning the UP as a 'middle of the road' party that avoided the race issue.<sup>1208</sup> He felt that "the party had gone as far to the left as was possible without losing the hard core of Party support and the good old *Bloed-sappe* but they were getting fed up."<sup>1209</sup>

Although Graaff was still willing to give the progressives a fair hearing, he was far from willing to accept their views.<sup>1210</sup> For example, he was surprised by the leftward tendencies of his Cape Province leader, Jan Steytler and brother Willem Steytler:

I was surprised when his brother proposed at the Cape Congress that the Party's policy should be one man, one vote on the common role, but I was even more surprised when Jan supported it.<sup>1211</sup>

According to Suzman, Graaff quickly came under the influence of the conservative wing of the party.<sup>1212</sup> He developed a close friendship with Mitchell, who was prominent in the conservative faction, which included ex-servicemen Vause Raw, Robert Badenhorst-Durrant, Aaron Berman, "Jack" Basson and Radcliffe Cadman.<sup>1213</sup>

Graaff was a member of the Cape Afrikaner gentry and remained naïve in terms of the stranglehold the Nationalists had on the platteland. As a politician, he believed that the UP should reflect, rather than direct, its members and the electorate at large. He was endowed with privilege from a young age and often valued loyalty more than principle among his followers. The 1958 elections would further test the cohesion of the UP.

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<sup>1205</sup> Mouton, 'No Prime Minister Could Want a Better Leader of the Opposition', 51.

<sup>1206</sup> Graaff quoted in Mouton, *Iron in the Soul*, 93.

<sup>1207</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2242 Hackland 'Interview with Sir De Villiers Graaff by B Hackland', 3.

<sup>1208</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2242 Hackland, 'Interview with Colin Eglin by B Hackland', 2–3.

<sup>1209</sup> Graaff, *Div Looks Back*, 144.

<sup>1210</sup> Mouton, 'No Prime Minister Could Want a Better Leader of the Opposition', 54.

<sup>1211</sup> Graaff, *Div Looks Back*, 160.

<sup>1212</sup> McConnachie, 'The 1961 General Election in the Republic of South Africa', 32.

<sup>1213</sup> Mouton, 'No Prime Minister Could Want a Better Leader of the Opposition', 59.

### 5.4.3 1958 elections

The 1958 general elections marked a decisive point in South African history. In this election, the NP was able to consolidate undisputed control over the South African White electorate. The Nationalists romped home with 97 seats and the six additional seats for South West Africa, knocking the LP out of Parliament and reducing the UP's seats by four to 53. After the election, the NP had secured a majority of 43 seats in Parliament.<sup>1214</sup> Even more telling for the UP, was that Graaff's lack of ruthlessness had become evident when he contested and lost his traditional seat in the Hottentots-Holland constituency. This political defeat was made all the more bitter since he had been warned that the NP had severely gerrymandered the constituency boundaries in their favour.<sup>1215</sup> Arguably, Graaff overestimated the value of his accrued capital, or that of his opponent.

In the 1958 elections, the number of ex-servicemen, in the sample group, who contested the elections increased from 36 to 45, as indicated in Table 5.8.<sup>1216</sup> The three LPSA candidates that contested Sea Point, Orange Grove and Pietermaritzburg were ex-servicemen. Leo Lovell stood for Labour in Benoni against fellow ex-serviceman Douglas Ross. Lee-Warden (SACOD) and Stanford (LPSA) returned as 'Native Representatives'. The remainder stood as UP candidates.<sup>1217</sup> The UP had thus remained a broad umbrella under which a majority of ex-servicemen sheltered.

Table 5.8 shows the UP's careful balance of the two dominant linguistic groups. However, the UPs courting of the Afrikaans-speaking electorate was as unsuccessful as in previous years. The English-speaking candidates successfully contested urban constituencies and in the rural areas the mostly Afrikaans-speaking UP candidates faced an even harder battle against Nationalist candidates. The NP had adopted a strategy that included the loading of rural constituencies, aggressive gerrymandering and the extensive use of identity politics, all of which prevented the UP from penetrating the *platteland* constituencies.

**Table 5.8: Ex-servicemen contesting the 1958 general elections (n=153)<sup>1218</sup>**

	Afrikaans-speaking	English-speaking	Jewish	Total
<b>Successful MPs</b>	5	12	3	20
<b>Unsuccessful candidates</b>	17	6	2	25
<b>Total</b>	22	18	5	45

<sup>1214</sup> McConnachie, 'The 1961 General Election in the Republic of South Africa', 4.

<sup>1215</sup> Mouton, 'No Prime Minister Could Want a Better Leader of the Opposition', 53.

<sup>1216</sup> The number of candidates with military records is probably higher.

<sup>1217</sup> Moffatt, 'From 'Conscience Politics' to the Battlefields of Political Activism', 85; 'Liberals Name Three to Fight Election', *Contact*, 1, no. 1 (1958), 3.

<sup>1218</sup> Table compiled by Author from South African Who's Who 1948-1977; DOD Archive, PA.

**Table 5.9: Military experience of ex-servicemen in the 1958 general elections and 12th Parliament 1958-1961 (n=153)<sup>1219</sup>**

	Number of ex-servicemen in sample	War experience				Membership of ex-serviceman organisation	
		Italy Star	Africa Star	AES	POW	SL	Torch
<b>MPs (elected in 1958)</b>	20	5	12	3	2	-	4
<b>Unsuccessful candidates</b>	24	8	15	2	2	2	6
<b>MPs (by elections and uncontested seats)</b>	3	-	3	-	1	-	-

Table 5.9 shows the wartime and veteran organisation experiences of the 1958 parliamentary opposition in the 12<sup>th</sup> Parliament. Similar to the 11<sup>th</sup> Parliament, the ex-servicemen with African campaign experience outnumbered those who had later fought in Italy. However, the increase in MPs with Italian campaign experience announced the arrival of a younger cohort of ex-servicemen on the political scene and suggested a broadening of both past military experience as well as political views among the ex-servicemen parliamentarians. The lingering political influence of the former politicised veteran organisations is evident by the ten Torchmen and two former legionnaires contesting the elections. The failure of Lovell and Beyleveld to secure their seats marked not only the end of the LP but also the end of the influence of the SL in parliamentary politics. The Torchmen, however, were more successful in securing parliamentary representation: Lee-Warden (Independent), Eglin (UP), Raw (UP) and Leo Kowarsky (UP) all secured seats in Parliament.<sup>1220</sup>

Although 20 ex-servicemen had won seats in the elections, minor political shuffling and by-election victories in 1960 and 1961, left the final tally, within the sample, at 23 ex-servicemen in the 12<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary sitting (1959-1961). Pilkington-Jordan resigned his seat (Rondebosch) in favour of fellow ex-servicemen and UP leader Graaff. Kowarsky vacated his seat (Yeoville) in favour of Marais Steyn. James Durrant (UP) won a by-election in 1960 and used his maiden speech to berate Erasmus for destroying the proud record of the UDF, taking the outcry over the Sharpeville Massacre to overshadow the subsequent political fracas. Ex-servicemen now constituted over a third of the UP parliamentary caucus. At least 20 of the 53 UP MPs were ex-servicemen.<sup>1221</sup>

With so many ex-servicemen now in Parliament, the unintended personal fallout that many of Erasmus' military reforms had caused came back to haunt him in parliamentary debates. Erasmus' running of the UDF had aggrieved many of the ex-servicemen on the election list. Durrant, the chair of the UP in the Transvaal, had resigned from the UDF under pressure in 1952.<sup>1222</sup> Pretorius, who had been court-martialled in August 1953 and dismissed from the UDF, contested the Boksburg seat

<sup>1219</sup> Table compiled by Author from South African Who's Who 1948-1977; DOD Archive, PA.

<sup>1220</sup> Table compiled by Author from South African Who's Who 1948-1977; DOD Archive PA.

<sup>1221</sup> *South African Who's Who 1948-1977*; DOD Archive, PA.

<sup>1222</sup> Boulter, 'FC Erasmus and the Politics of South African Defence 1948-1959', 58.

for the UP.<sup>1223</sup> McMillan, who was denied a 'step-up' rank on retirement on the most insubstantial grounds, fought the Durban Central seat.<sup>1224</sup> Two victims of the infamous 1953 mass dismissal of officers later known as the 'Midnight Ride', were also candidates on the UP list.<sup>1225</sup> Brigadier Hendrick Bronkhorst, a UP organiser, contested the Roodepoort constituency and Colonel JA de Vos at Vanderbylpark.<sup>1226</sup> Wally Kingwill, who led his officers in a mass resignation over the renaming of the Die Middellandse Regiment to the Regiment Gideon Scheepers in 1953 now stood in Graaff-Reinet.<sup>1227</sup> Ross, who as chairman of the BESL had clashed with Erasmus over the creation of a defence council, stood in Benoni against fellow ex-serviceman Lovell. In 1961 Gideon Jacobs, whose appointment as Dean of the Military Academy was refused by Erasmus because Jacobs' "politics were not right", entered into politics as a UP organiser. Jacobs was subsequently elected as MP for Hillbrow in the 1966 general election.<sup>1228</sup> After the 1959 elections, the new Prime Minister, Hendrik Verwoerd, who succeeded Hans Strydom, replaced Erasmus. Erasmus was succeeded as the Minister of Defence by Jim Fouché. Fouché's appointment placated some ex-servicemen in the UP. For instance, Pilkington-Jordan described Fouché as "a real improvement over his predecessor."<sup>1229</sup>

By 1958, Graaff commanded the absolute loyalty of many ex-servicemen in the UP. Men who now represented a fair amount of his parliamentary caucus and party structures.<sup>1230</sup> One such individual was Kingwill, who was a typical Graaff devotee, had served in Die Middellandse Regiment and shared Graaff's POW status. Kingwill would not even allow his wife to criticise Graaff.<sup>1231</sup> As previously discussed, Graaff depended on the loyalty of a network of ex-servicemen, or his social capital, to control the party and quash opposition:

In fact, in many small villages our committees consisted almost entirely of old comrades who had decided to come in and give a hand.<sup>1232</sup>

What he [Steytler] didn't know, and should have known, was that forty of the chaps on his divisional committee, well counting that's husbands and wives [*sic.*], were people who'd served with me in my regiment. And there was just no argument.<sup>1233</sup>

Furthermore, personal loyalties extended beyond the immediate boundaries of party politics. The personal relationships that had developed within the veteran community during the early 1950s

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<sup>1223</sup> Boulter, 61.

<sup>1224</sup> DOD Archive, PA, Personnel Service File, P1/2535/1 [Cmdt ND Mc Millian VD (MP)], 'Step in Rank: Cmdt ND McMillan, Vd (MP). Reserve of Officers dated 8 October 1954', 97, 105.

<sup>1225</sup> Harthorn, *Avenge Tobruk*, 214-218.

<sup>1226</sup> Boulter, 'FC Erasmus and the Politics of South African Defence 1948-1959', 228.

<sup>1227</sup> Boulter, 'FC Erasmus and the Politics of South African Defence 1948-1959', 65; Mitchell, *Tartan on the Veld*, 71.

<sup>1228</sup> Jacobs, *Beckoning Horizons*, 120, 162.

<sup>1229</sup> Boulter, 'FC Erasmus and the Politics of South African Defence 1948-1959', 229.

<sup>1230</sup> McConnachie, 'The 1961 General Election in the Republic of South Africa', 32; Mouton, *Iron in the Soul*, 97.

<sup>1231</sup> Mouton, 'No Prime Minister Could Want a Better Leader of the Opposition', 55; Mouton, *Iron in the Soul*, 97.

<sup>1232</sup> Graaff, *Div Looks Back*, 141.

<sup>1233</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2242 Hackland, 'Interview with Sir De Villiers Graaff by B Hackland', 9.

meant that the UP was still able to call on former Torch members and veterans for support and assistance.<sup>1234</sup>

#### 5.4.4 The split in the UP and formation of the Progressive Party

The poor performance in the elections only worsened the already difficult relationship between the progressive and liberal, and the conservative wings of the party.<sup>1235</sup> His loss in 1958 of the Hottentots-Holland seat had made Graaff even less tolerant of the progressive left-wing of the party.<sup>1236</sup> He informed Eglin, during a discussion over the election results, that he would no longer allow the progressives to influence him to his detriment.<sup>1237</sup>

When a new MP, ex-serviceman and business financier, Andrew Brown, queried Graaff regarding the election defeat of 1958, Graaff appointed a committee to investigate the reasons for the defeat. Three of the six members on the committee were ex-servicemen, namely Gray-Hughes, James Hamilton-Russel and Raw. Following the investigation, the committee agreed on two points. Firstly, that the UP lacked a clear policy. Secondly, that since South Africa was a multi-racial country the UP required a forward-looking policy. Graaff used the minority opinion of the conservative Raw, who refused to agree to the extension of the Coloured franchise, to sink the committee's findings in January 1959.<sup>1238</sup> Graaff's commitment to the conservative position was thus made clear through these actions.

In August 1959, the UP Congress in Bloemfontein marked the showdown between the conservatives and the liberal and progressive factions. The ensuing split saw the progressive faction form the Progressive Party (PP) that same year.<sup>1239</sup> The charged atmosphere in the UP before the Congress, suggested that the party was at a breaking point. Even Graaff had hinted to the media that the UP Congress would result in some MPs quitting the party.<sup>1240</sup>

The progressives were not unaware of conservative machinations. Raw claimed that the conservatives had "organised it overtly, and that was our intention, and we chose the issues".<sup>1241</sup> Conservatives, such as Mitchell, Raw, Badenhorst-Durrant and Basson marshalled the conservative faction in preparation for the showdown.<sup>1242</sup> Basson had even forewarned Mrs Jacqueline Beck (née de Villiers), a progressive, that he was going to use the Congress to get at Jan Steytler.<sup>1243</sup>

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<sup>1234</sup> Eglin, *Crossing the Borders of Power*, 58.

<sup>1235</sup> McConnachie, 'The 1961 General Election in the Republic of South Africa', 11.

<sup>1236</sup> Mouton, 'No Prime Minister Could Want a Better Leader of the Opposition', 54.

<sup>1237</sup> McConnachie, 'The 1961 General Election in the Republic of South Africa', 12.

<sup>1238</sup> Eglin, *Crossing the Borders of Power*, 64.

<sup>1239</sup> Eglin, *Crossing the Borders of Power*, 53.

<sup>1240</sup> McConnachie, 'The 1961 General Election in the Republic of South Africa', 125.

<sup>1241</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2242 Hackland, 'Interview with Colin Eglin by B Hackland', 3.

<sup>1242</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2242 Hackland, 'Interview with Dr Jan Steytler by B Hackland'; 'Interview with Colin Eglin by B Hackland'; Eglin, *Crossing the Borders of Power*, 67; Mouton, 'No Prime Minister Could Want a Better Leader of the Opposition', 54; McConnachie, 'The 1961 General Election in the Republic of South Africa', 124–25.

<sup>1243</sup> McConnachie, 'The 1961 General Election in the Republic of South Africa', 129.



Badenhorst-Durrant even boasted after the conference, “I travelled all over the country, covering thousands of miles, visiting party members in the platteland and organising to get rid of you liberals at the congress – and see how well it worked!”<sup>1244</sup> The progressives had foreknowledge that Raw had instructed party organisers to send delegates to the Congress who would “drive the liberals out of the party”.<sup>1245</sup> For the progressives, it was evident that the conservatives had planned the purge in minutiae.<sup>1246</sup> “This bore every sign of having been organised in advance, and it soon became evident to us that a concerted attempt was being made to drive us out of the party.”<sup>1247</sup>

Eglin believed the tensions in the party had made it easy for the conservatives to predict the outcome of their purge “... drive the knife in there we'll get rid of those three, if we drive it in there we'll get rid of six, and if we drive it in there we'll get rid of nine”.<sup>1248</sup> Despite Graaff's denial of having any knowledge of the plot, Oppenheimer had forewarned him against supporting the conservatives.<sup>1249</sup> Oppenheimer, although no longer active in politics due to his business responsibilities, still took a close interest in the UP.

At the Bloemfontein Congress in August 1959, the conservatives relentlessly beleaguered the progressive speakers, hoping to push some of the progressives to leave the party.<sup>1250</sup> Their haranguing soon became personal and provocative. Instead of cooling tempers, Graaff allowed the conservatives to vent their frustration and anger at the progressives. Through this, Graaff hoped that it would clear the air between the two camps and possibly drive home his point that the liberals had exceeded the bounds of the electorate.<sup>1251</sup>

Mitchell, however, was not content with the *rapprochement* envisaged by Graaff, since it would have kept all but the most resolute progressive towing the party line. Instead, he decided to make the progressive camp's position untenable. He used a motion that the UP opposed, the purchasing of more land by the government, to create quasi-sovereign Black Homelands to increase pressure on the progressives.<sup>1252</sup> When an overwhelming majority passed his resolution, the discredited and battered progressives had little left but to withdraw from the party. Graaff was surprised at the extent of the purge, which took around 25 per cent of his parliamentary caucus. He was able to stem some of the flow by convincing Sydney Waterson, and Hamilton-Russell to remain in the UP. Hamilton-Russell later left the UP for the PP in 1963.<sup>1253</sup>

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<sup>1244</sup> McConnachie, 125.

<sup>1245</sup> McConnachie, 129.

<sup>1246</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2242 Hackland, 'Interview with Colin Eglin by B Hackland', 3.

<sup>1247</sup> SAIRR, *South African Institute of Race Relations 1958-1959*, (Johannesburg: SAIRR, 1959), 4.

<sup>1248</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2242 Hackland, 'Interview with Colin Eglin by B Hackland', 3.

<sup>1249</sup> Eglin, *Crossing the Borders of Power*, 68.

<sup>1250</sup> McConnachie, 'The 1961 General Election in the Republic of South Africa', 130–31.

<sup>1251</sup> McConnachie, 'The 1961 General Election in the Republic of South Africa', 132.

<sup>1252</sup> McConnachie, 133.

<sup>1253</sup> McConnachie, 136.

Graaff eventually reconciled himself that the split was voluntary and a final confirmation that the progressives had strayed too far from the mandate of the UP. Therefore “[t]hey could no longer associate themselves with the conservative South African approach of the United Party ...”<sup>1254</sup> He was relieved to have restored calm to his party by ejecting the fractious progressives. Ex-servicemen now accounted for about half of the UP parliamentary caucus. The high concentration of conservative ex-servicemen among the remaining MPs resulted in a more congenial atmosphere in the UP.<sup>1255</sup> However, it would not bode well in the long term.

On 13 November 1959, eleven MPs, of whom three were ex-servicemen, resigned from the UP to form the PP.<sup>1256</sup> The eleven were Suzman, Cope, Owen Williams, Butcher, Swart, Zach de Beer, Clive van Ryneveld, Lawrence, Boris Wilson and ex-servicemen Eglin, Fourie, and Jan Steytler. A further five MPCs, including ex-servicemen Kowarsky and Beck, joined them. Furthermore, four candidates who had contested seats in the general election, including two ex-servicemen Ralph Parrott and Willem Steytler, also left the UP to join the PP.<sup>1257</sup> This loss “was a tragedy for the UP as the party lost ... [their] brightest minds and most capable MPs”.<sup>1258</sup> However, simultaneously the loss was subdued since it restored homogeneity to the UP since most of the remaining MPs were ex-servicemen loyal to Graaff.<sup>1259</sup>

At the PP’s inaugural Congress in November 1959, the executive of the new party included five ex-servicemen, namely Jan Steytler, Eglin, Friedman, Kowarsky, and Parrott.<sup>1260</sup> In total, the prominent ex-servicemen/woman that resigned immediately from the UP to form the PP numbered seven, with another three, Stanford, Hamilton-Russell and Friedman joining the PP later. Table 5.10 shows the war experience of these ex-servicemen. Although the African campaigns still accounted for most of their war experience, there was a relative increase in those with Italian campaign experience. The increase in Italian campaign veterans suggested two trends. Not only was a younger cohort of politicians emerging, but the Italian campaign had seemingly affected soldiers differently. The presence of four former prominent Torchmen (Parrott, the former National Organiser, Kowarsky, the former National Treasurer, Eglin, the Chairman for the Pinelands Torch and Willem Steytler, the chairman of the Burgersdorp Torch) confirms that the progressive and liberal ex-servicemen had exerted substantial influence within the PP, despite their numbers being small. However, the near-equal language split seen in Table 5.10 confirms that at least some Afrikaans-speaking politicians

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<sup>1254</sup> McConnachie, 141.

<sup>1255</sup> Mouton, ‘No Prime Minister Could Want a Better Leader of the Opposition’, 55.

<sup>1256</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2242 Hackland, ‘Interview with Colin Eglin by B Hackland’, 5.

<sup>1257</sup> McConnachie, ‘The 1961 General Election in the Republic of South Africa’, 135; UNISA-UP Archive, Sir De Villiers Graaff Papers, Subject File 99, Progressive Party 1959-1971, ‘The Progressive News, October 1959’.

<sup>1258</sup> Mouton, *Iron in the Soul*, 96.

<sup>1259</sup> Mouton, 96-97.

<sup>1260</sup> UNISA-UP Archive, Sir De Villiers Graaff Papers, Subject File 99, Progressive Party 1959-1971, ‘The Progressive News October 1959’.

were able to evade the corralling of Afrikaners by the NP into a single, homogeneous, Afrikaner Nationalist bloc.

**Table 5.10: Language and military experience of ex-servicemen in the Progressive Party (n=153)<sup>1261</sup>**

Language	Ex-servicemen in sample	Africa Star	Italy Star	AES
Afrikaans-speaking	4	1	-	2
English-speaking	4	3	3	-
Jewish	2	1	-	-
<b>Total</b>	10	5	3	2

The progressives in principle were willing to embrace a degree of non-racialism and the “protection of fundamental human rights and the safeguard of the dignity and worth of the human person, irrespective of race, colour or creed”<sup>1262</sup> and that “no citizen of the Union of South Africa shall be debarred on grounds of race, religion, language or sex, from making a contribution to our national life ...”<sup>1263</sup> However, when it came to the universal franchise, they ran against the same issue that the LPSA and UFP had grappled with before them, the qualified franchise. The need to protect ‘the values of Western Civilisation’ and group identities (i.e. White minority rights) made them wary of advocating universal suffrage. Their solution was:

To enable suitably qualified citizens of a defined degree of civilisation belonging to any population group to participate in the government of the country in accordance to their ability to assume responsibility, through the holding of public office and through registration on a common electoral roll for election of members of the House of Assembly, with special provision for the representation of persons not so qualified.<sup>1264</sup>

Thus the PP rather aimed for the creation of a non-racial qualified franchise rather than universal suffrage. Secondly, for a non-racial Bill of Rights and lastly, to end all racial discrimination in South Africa. However, these aims might have been too ‘progressive’ for the time considering the frequency and intensity of violence both domestically and in other parts of the continent. Despite its attempts to assuage the minority while simultaneously advancing its non-racial policies, the PP still alienated the White electorate.<sup>1265</sup>

<sup>1261</sup> Table compiled by Author from South African Who's Who 1948-1977; DOD Archive, PA.

<sup>1262</sup> UNISA-UP Archive, Sir De Villiers Graaff Papers, Subject File 99, Progressive Party 1959-1971, ‘The Progressive Party of South Africa. Main Principles and Policies Adopted at Inaugural Congress November 13th & 14th, 1959’.

<sup>1263</sup> UNISA-UP Archive, Sir De Villiers Graaff Papers, Subject File 99, Progressive Party 1959-1971, ‘The Progressive Party of South Africa. Main Principles and Policies Adopted at Inaugural Congress November 13th & 14th, 1959’.

<sup>1264</sup> UNISA-UP Archive, Sir De Villiers Graaff Papers, Subject File 99, Progressive Party 1959-1971, ‘The Progressive Party of South Africa. Main Principles and Policies Adopted at Inaugural Congress November 13th & 14th, 1959.’

<sup>1265</sup> Mouton, *Iron in the Soul*, 131.

In almost tragic irony, in 1970 Malherbe showed that even years later, the PP's qualified franchise proposal did not weaken the White population's political control over South Africa. Malherbe estimated that the combination of the education proposed (grade 8) and income required (R1000 pm) would result in an electorate still dominated by Whites (82.8 per cent), with Blacks (10.3 per cent), Coloureds (4.7 per cent) and Indian/Asiatics (2.2 per cent) having little influence relative to their population size.<sup>1266</sup> The progressives hoped that such a gradual response would placate the growing demands for universal representation. However, events in the broader South African political landscape soon over-shadowed the PP's political programme.

## 5.5 THE IMPACT OF 1960 ON EX-SERVICEMEN IN EXTRA-PARLIAMENTARY POLITICS

Although the 1958 elections had confirmed the NP's dominance of White politics, their suppression of growing Black discord had faltered. However, by March 1960, the dam of pent up Black frustration burst without warning. The Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) attempted to pre-empt the ANC's anti-pass campaign by launching a similar campaign in Sharpeville on 21 March 1960. An unprepared police reaction resulted in the death of 69 Black South Africans and hundreds of others injured.<sup>1267</sup> The government responded to the violence of Sharpeville in an almost knee-jerk reaction by arresting 11 279 Africans, 90 Asians, 36 Coloureds and 98 Whites, of whom 35 were women.<sup>1268</sup>

Those detained since the government decreed a state of emergency on 30 March 1960 believed that the government had used an out-of-date list of "known communists", drawn from membership lists of the former CPSA, to determine who to arrest.<sup>1269</sup> This deduction was largely based on the fact that not all of them were actually communists in the strictest sense. Bernstein describes the confusion of the detainees:

In the white male cell, there are around fifteen others, many of them my political colleagues. Some are, like Archie, former communists who have long since dropped out of politics. Some have even changed their political orientation entirely. They are all, understandably, disorientated and shocked to find themselves summarily jailed.<sup>1270</sup>

Meidner sarcastically commented that he had "been imprisoned twice, once by the Communists, and once for being a Communist".<sup>1271</sup> The haphazard, blanket approach of the state's detentions is also disbelievably expressed by Isacowitz when he commented to Bernstein who was with him in detention that, "If anyone had told me that I would find myself singing hymns alongside Rusty

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<sup>1266</sup> UNISA-UP Archive, Sir De Villiers Graaff Papers, Subject File 99, Progressive Party 1959-1971, 'What the Prog Party's Vote Policy Means'.

<sup>1267</sup> Bernstein, *Memory Against Forgetting*, 170.

<sup>1268</sup> Du Toit, 'The National Committee for Liberation ('ARM') 1960-1964', 13; Bernstein, *Memory Against Forgetting*, 177.

<sup>1269</sup> Du Toit, 'The National Committee for Liberation ('ARM') 1960-1964', 13; Bernstein, *Memory Against Forgetting*, 177.

<sup>1270</sup> Bernstein, *Memory Against Forgetting*, 177.

<sup>1271</sup> T Mansfield, 'Obituary : Hans Meidner 1914-2001', *The New Phytologist*, 153, no. 3 (2019), 370.

Bernstein, I'd have told him to get his head read!"<sup>1272</sup> The debateable accuracy of the list's contents rested on the fact that the White detainees consisted of leading members of the LPSA, as well as the then secret underground SACP, among others.<sup>1273</sup>

The SACP, founded in 1953, was then only a clandestine party albeit that some have argued that its existence was known by some in left-wing politics. It was only in 1960 that the SACP's existence was announced. Unfortunately, the state was less discerning about correctly identifying an individual's political affiliations or orientation. They rather lumped everyone with liberal or radical views into one category, namely 'communists'. Thus the government label communist applied to non-communists as much as former members of the CPSA, individuals who saw themselves as communists, even if they were averse to the former CPSA or other self-professed communists.<sup>1274</sup>

Almost two months after the Sharpsville massacre, on 10 May 1960, the Department of Justice circulated, arguably the same outdated list, within the civil service of "known communist" office bearers, officials and active communists which included 15 of the ex-servicemen in this study. They were Hodgson, Bunting, Carneson, Williams, Slovo, Routh, Lipman, Bernstein, Hathorn, Isacowitz, Rowley Arenstein, Wolfie Kodesh, Joseph Podbrey, John O'Meara and John Morley-Turner.<sup>1275</sup>

The extent of the violence and the subsequent draconian reaction of the Nationalist government convinced communist revolutionaries and liberals alike that change was afoot and that a national revolution was both inevitable and even imminent.<sup>1276</sup> Ironically, the arrest of so many White dissidents allowed them to reassess their positions on the state of the country and renew old relationships.<sup>1277</sup> The members detained together in Johannesburg and Natal were a venerable collection of ex-servicemen who knew each other through their involvement in the African and Italian campaigns during the war and had forged deep bonds in the SL. The White ex-servicemen detained from 30 March 1960 were Hathorn (Natal - SACOD), Arenstein (Natal - former member of the CPSA), Peter Brown (Natal - National Chairman LPSA), Meidner (Natal - Natal Provincial Chairman LPSA), Slovo (Johannesburg - SACOD), Isacowitz (Johannesburg - LPSA), John Lang (Johannesburg - LPSA), Monty Berman (Johannesburg - former members of the CPSA), Williams (Johannesburg - SACOD), and Bernstein.<sup>1278</sup> On 31 March 1960, the Nationalist regime published a Government

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<sup>1272</sup> Bernstein, *Memory Against Forgetting*, 185.

<sup>1273</sup> Du Toit, 'The National Committee for Liberation ('ARM') 1960-1964', 13; Bernstein, *Memory Against Forgetting*, 177.

<sup>1274</sup> Lodge, 'Secret Party', 433.

<sup>1275</sup> DOD Archive, Minister of Defence - Erasmus/Fouché (MVEF) 128, 'Lys Opgestel Deur Die Beredderaar Ingevolge Artikel 4(1) van Die Wet Op Die Onderdrukking van Communisms, 1950 (Wet No.44 van 1950) van Persone Wat Ampsdraers, Beamptes, Lede of Aktiewe Ondersteuners Is of Was van Die Kommunistiese Party van Suid-Afrika'.

<sup>1276</sup> M Gunther, 'The National Committee of Liberation (NCL)/ African Resistance Movement (ARM)', 193.

<sup>1277</sup> Du Toit, 'The National Committee for Liberation ('ARM') 1960-1964', 71.

<sup>1278</sup> Bernstein, *Memory Against Forgetting*, 174; Moffatt, 'From 'Conscience Politics' to the Battlefields of Political Activism', 124; A Egan, 'Detention without Trial: The Experience of the Reverend Douglas Thompson in the South African State of Emergency, 1960' (Johannesburg: Jesuit Institute South Africa), 2-3.

Gazette officially declaring a state of emergency to retrospectively cover the arrests made in the pre-dawn hours of the previous day.<sup>1279</sup>

Kodesh, acting on a tip-off from Braam Fischer,<sup>1280</sup> remained at large, disguised as a chauffeur for Moses Kotane, fulfilling an essential role as a driver, runner and courier.<sup>1281</sup> Carneson, also acting on a tip-off, went into hiding. His wife, however, was detained by the police.<sup>1282</sup> Strachan and Hodgson escaped separately to Swaziland, joining Beyleveld who was already there. However, Rica Hodgson did not escape detention.<sup>1283</sup> After the Sharpeville Massacre, liberal and radical alike were subjected to wholesale arrest, detention and banning by the government as indicated in Table 5.11.

**Table 5.11: Suppression of ex-servicemen in opposition formations (n=153)<sup>1284</sup>**

	Communist	SL	LP	LPSA	SACOD
<b>Members banned, arrested or detained<sup>1285</sup></b>	16	17	2	10	13
<b>Not suppressed</b>	2	15	2	7	1
<b>Total</b>	18	32	4	17	14

### 5.5.1 National Committee of Liberation/African Resistance Movement

In prison, Monty Berman became the catalyst for discussions around the contingencies of an armed struggle.<sup>1286</sup> Berman had been expelled from the underground South African Communist Party (SACP) but was allowed by his previous cell leader, Slovo, to continue to work within the Congress movement. In prison, he abandoned his previous conviction that an armed struggle was premature and began canvassing support for the idea.<sup>1287</sup> Berman also drew on his knowledge of the *Maquis* in Second World War France, his first-hand observations of the Italian partisans, and the actions of the Jewish Brigade in the new state of Israel for his planning of the campaign. He proposed a sabotage organisation that would spark a broader revolution among the Africans.<sup>1288</sup> He engaged both communists and non-communists, selling the idea of a broad umbrella front under which all interest parties could participate.<sup>1289</sup>

<sup>1279</sup> Simpson, *Umkhonto WeSizwe*, 23.

<sup>1280</sup> Simpson, 22.

<sup>1281</sup> Bernstein, *Memory Against Forgetting*, 176.

<sup>1282</sup> Carneson, *Red in the Rainbow*, 162–63.

<sup>1283</sup> Simpson, *Umkhonto WeSizwe*, 22; Wits Historical Papers, A2521 aa, David Everatt Papers, 'Interview with Piet Beyleveld by David Everatt.' Strachan, *Make a Skyf, Man!*, 21–22.

<sup>1284</sup> Bernstein, *Memory Against Forgetting*, 174; Moffatt, 'From 'Conscience Politics' to the Battlefields of Political Activism', 124; Egan, 'Detention without Trial', 1–14.

<sup>1285</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A3302. The government kept who they banned secret, prohibiting newspapers from publishing the names. The names were identified from security files available at the national archives.

<sup>1286</sup> Gunther, 'The National Committee of Liberation (NCL)/ African Resistance Movement (ARM)', 195–96.

<sup>1287</sup> Du Toit, 'The National Committee for Liberation ('ARM') 1960-1964', 71.

<sup>1288</sup> Du Toit, 14.

<sup>1289</sup> Gunther, 'The National Committee of Liberation (NCL)/ African Resistance Movement (ARM)', 196.



He immediately struck up a friendship with fellow ex-servicemen Lang.<sup>1290</sup> Lang had come to the LPSA through the Torch. He had already developed a reputation as a maverick and had attempted to resurrect the Torch in 1955.<sup>1291</sup> His involvement in *Freedom Radio* in Natal, had established his underground credentials. This was especially after he had been arrested and charged for contravening the Radio Act in May 1956.<sup>1292</sup> *Freedom Radio* made its first debut on 15 April 1956 and quickly became a prominent voice of a secret Natalian group that opposed the government. Its 'cousin', known as the Horticulturalists, was a highly secretive, paramilitary organisation formed in 1959.<sup>1293</sup> The Horticulturalists had also considered launching a sabotage campaign, and Lang's close involvement with the group made him receptive to Berman's plan.<sup>1294</sup> When Lang was released in June 1960, following his arrest after Sharpville, he concocted grandiose plans for the National Committee of Liberation (NCL). He was able to secure funding for the movement from the Ghanaian government, via his connection with Rubin, who was lecturing law in Ghana. Lang and Rubin had a long history together, both were lawyers at LP Rubin, both had been members of the Torch, and both were members of the LPSA.<sup>1295</sup>

The newly-formed NCL in 1960 attracted a mixed bag of revolutionaries. They included radical liberals, ex-communists, members of the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL), and Trotskyists.<sup>1296</sup> All loathed apartheid and felt that the Nationalist government had denied them a legal outlet to their frustrations. Almost naively, they were firmly committed to avoiding injuring people, opting for sabotage over violent agitation of the population. Furthermore, most were mavericks or ostracised by their organisations. Their previous experience with the former CPSA cadre led to a deep suspicion of the newly announced SACP, which stood accused of using Trojan Horse tactics like its predecessor to subvert other movements. Membership of the NCL at this stage was estimated to be four Blacks and seven Whites.<sup>1297</sup>

The movement initially centred on assisting people to flee into exile. In this regard, Lang and Berman were able to involve another ex-serviceman and ex-communist, Lipman, in several daring operations. These included an attempt to destroy the Bantu Administration Tax Office in

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<sup>1290</sup> Bernstein, *Memory Against Forgetting*, 191.

<sup>1291</sup> UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information, Subject File 158 (Part 1), War Veterans Torch Commando, 'Letter from J Lang to AL Kowarsky, Esq. Dated 3rd February 1955'.

<sup>1292</sup> Du Toit, 'The National Committee for Liberation ('ARM') 1960-1964', 90; Bernstein, *Memory Against Forgetting*, 191.

<sup>1293</sup> M Coghlan, 'The Horticulturists, Freedom Radio and the Erasmus Society: Pietermaritzburg-based protest against the Nationalist Government in the 1950s and early 1960s', *Natalia*, 25 (1995), 55, 57.

<sup>1294</sup> Du Toit, 'The National Committee for Liberation ('ARM') 1960-1964', 90; Bernstein, *Memory Against Forgetting*, 191; Gunther, 'The National Committee of Liberation (NCL)/ African Resistance Movement (ARM)', 200.

<sup>1295</sup> Gunther, 'The National Committee of Liberation (NCL)/ African Resistance Movement (ARM)'; Vigne, *Liberals Against Apartheid*, 233-35; Du Toit, 'The National Committee for Liberation ('ARM') 1960-1964', 177.

<sup>1296</sup> Du Toit, 'The National Committee for Liberation ('ARM') 1960-1964', 69.

<sup>1297</sup> Gunther, 'The National Committee of Liberation (NCL)/ African Resistance Movement (ARM)', 195.

Johannesburg and sabotage electric pylons in Edenvale. Lipman joined the NCL out of a desperate desire 'to do something.'<sup>1298</sup> By the time Umkhonto we Sizwe had been formed, the NCL had already destroyed two powerlines and had severely damaged a pass office.<sup>1299</sup> In December 1961, the NCL, through Bernstein, discussed the idea of launching joint operations with MK.<sup>1300</sup> However, by mid-December 1961, relations between the two organisations had soured, and MK refused further cooperation with the NCL.<sup>1301</sup> The NCL faced a setback after Lang fled the country in June 1961 under a cloud of suspicion for fraud and Monty and Myrtle Berman left South Africa around the same time after a tip-off that they were to be arrested by the security police.<sup>1302</sup>

### 5.5.2 Umkhonto we Sizwe

When the government banned the CPSA in 1950, ex-servicemen in the banned CPSA toyed with the idea of insurrection. When the CPSA was reconstituted as the SACP in 1953, the ex-servicemen in the party decided to move towards violent action. However, nothing came of the decision.<sup>1303</sup> The most militant of the ex-servicemen was Hodgson, who had a politicising effect on everyone. Stella Beyleveld could not "see any organisation not becoming political with Jack Hodgson in it".<sup>1304</sup> His mining background gave him experience with explosives, and his service in the 'elite' Desert Rats made a lasting impression on his colleagues.<sup>1305</sup>

He'd been a miner, he was a mine captain. So he knew about explosives. And he had been with the Desert Rats in the Army, so he was quite an authority...And so Jack started to make the first bombs for MK.<sup>1306</sup>

By the late 1950s, both the underground ANC and SACP were moving independently towards the violent option to bring political change.<sup>1307</sup> Both considered violence to be the inevitable option and that it was essential to gain control of the already volatile situation.<sup>1308</sup> By August 1960, radical youth in the ANC had begun organising in ad hoc sabotage groups.<sup>1309</sup> By the middle of 1961, the SACP had established several groups in Johannesburg, with Ahmed Kathrada and Hodgson already cutting telephone lines in Johannesburg.<sup>1310</sup> Where the SACP focused on creating specialist units, Mandela

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<sup>1298</sup> Gunther, 197 footnote 19.

<sup>1299</sup> Gunther, 201.

<sup>1300</sup> Bernstein, *Memory Against Forgetting*, 211.

<sup>1301</sup> Gunther, 'The National Committee of Liberation (NCL)/ African Resistance Movement (ARM)', 199.

<sup>1302</sup> Du Toit, 'The National Committee for Liberation ('ARM') 1960-1964', 95.

<sup>1303</sup> PS Landau, 'The ANC, MK, and 'The Turn to Violence' (1960-1962)', *South African Historical Journal*, 64, no. 3 (2012), 541.

<sup>1304</sup> Wits Historical Papers, A2521 aa, David Everatt Papers, 'Interview with Piet Beyleveld by David Everatt.'

<sup>1305</sup> Bernstein, *Memory Against Forgetting*, 209; S. Ellis, 'The Genesis of the ANC's Armed Struggle in South Africa 1948-1961', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 37, no. 4 (2011), 7; UWC-Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, RF/6/5, Pinnock Interviews, 'Interview with Rica Hodgson by Don Pinnock'.

<sup>1306</sup> UWC-Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, RF/6/5, Pinnock Interviews, 'Interview with Rica Hodgson by Don Pinnock'.

<sup>1307</sup> Roos, *Ordinary Springboks*, 174.

<sup>1308</sup> Landau, 'The ANC, MK, and 'The Turn to Violence' (1960-1962)', 545.

<sup>1309</sup> Ellis, 'The Genesis of the ANC's Armed Struggle in South Africa 1948-1961', 14.

<sup>1310</sup> Ellis, 'The Genesis of the ANC's Armed Struggle in South Africa 1948-1961', 22; Landau, 'The ANC, MK, and 'The Turn to Violence' (1960-1962)', 553.

preferred quantity, and soon the number of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) units outstripped the SACP units. The SACP soon augmented the skills within the growing number of MK units by transferring members to MK.<sup>1311</sup> For instance, Hodgson and Arthur Goldreich, due to their military experience, were seconded to MK.<sup>1312</sup> Such close interaction led to discussions to merge the two initiatives. The discussions led to the dissolution of the communist specialist units, and their organic transfer to MK around July 1961.<sup>1313</sup> The SACP appointed Slovo as the SACP liaison to MK and Mandela represented the ANC as the overall commander.<sup>1314</sup> In the Western Cape, Carneson accepted the appointment of MK regional coordinator, thus placing ex-servicemen central to the creation and command of the emerging MK.<sup>1315</sup>

On 16 December 1961, MK launched its first symbolic attack on the state. Predictably the ex-servicemen were key protagonists in these attacks. The preparation for the first actions of the armed struggle relied on ex-servicemen who had at least a rudimentary understanding of home-made explosives,<sup>1316</sup> with Hodgson in Johannesburg, and Strachan in Port Elizabeth.<sup>1317</sup> In Johannesburg, Bernstein, Hodgson and Ben Turok were responsible for delivering the bombs to various cell groups. Slovo attempted to bomb the Johannesburg Drill Hall.<sup>1318</sup> He later met up with Bernstein and Hodgson where they attempted to blow up the main telephone lines between Pretoria and Johannesburg.<sup>1319</sup> Kodesh, with Reggie Vandeyar, Laloo Chiba and Paul Joseph, was able to bomb two targets that night.<sup>1320</sup> These ex-servicemen formed the kernel of the ANC's initial armed struggle. Many of them were in the SL during the war, and fought in Africa and Italy together. Thus, there was a thread of continuity between the ideals that these men forged during the war and the broader struggle against authoritarian oppression.

## 5.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter traced the eclipse of ex-servicemen organisations within South African politics after 1953. The failure of the Torch and the Front to capitalise on the ex-serviceman identity to stem the NP's electoral successes in 1953, undermined the political influence of the ex-serviceman community as a political constituency. As a result, both parliamentary and extra-parliamentary politics reflected the dissipation of the ex-serviceman identity during this time. Out of the Torch, two political parties, the LPSA and the UFP emerged and neither attempted to make the ex-serviceman identity an election platform. Even the SL, with its virulent, anti-fascist rhetoric, shed its wartime

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<sup>1311</sup> Bernstein, *Memory Against Forgetting*, 208–9.

<sup>1312</sup> Bernstein, 209.

<sup>1313</sup> Bernstein, *Memory Against Forgetting*, 208–9. Simpson, *Umkhonto WeSizwe*, 34.

<sup>1314</sup> Ellis, 'The Genesis of the ANC's Armed Struggle in South Africa 1948-1961', 22.

<sup>1315</sup> Simpson, *Umkhonto WeSizwe*, 34; Carneson, *Red in the Rainbow*, 168.

<sup>1316</sup> Landau, 'The ANC, MK, and 'The Turn to Violence' (1960–1962)', 554.

<sup>1317</sup> Cherry, *Umkhonto WeSizwe*, 21; Simpson, *Umkhonto WeSizwe*, 34–36.

<sup>1318</sup> Simpson, *Umkhonto WeSizwe*, 39.

<sup>1319</sup> Bernstein, *Memory Against Forgetting*, 213.

<sup>1320</sup> Simpson, *Umkhonto WeSizwe*, 41.

association as it merged into the SACOD within the Congress Movement. Thus, despite an increase of ex-servicemen in Parliament and an ever more insular ex-serviceman grouping within the radical left, the appeal of wartime associations and values as a political constituency receded.

However, wartime loyalties and obligations still persisted. These associations between ex-servicemen, when layered with other shared experiences, such as similar schooling, education and occupations, created overlapping networks of interaction and understanding. The radical left, already politicised before the war, grew more insular from the broader political community as government oppression increased, which ironically forced them into a closer, albeit begrudged interaction with the liberal community. In parliamentary politics, often unquestioning ex-serviceman loyalty to charismatic leadership worsened tensions between the conservative, liberal and progressive ex-servicemen in the UP. In 1959, the formation of the PP exposed the contradictions between the social capital derived from wartime loyalty to Graaff and the progressive ideals that war had inculcated in the habitus of the ex-servicemen. The resultant parting of ways of the ex-servicemen in the two factions meant that by 1959 the memory of war-service no longer united ex-servicemen as a coherent political identity. The war may have triggered their entry into politics, but did not have a uniform or persistent influence on the ex-serviceman's political disposition. The concluding chapter highlights the influence that the war had on the ex-servicemen who participated in post-war politics in opposition to the NP.

## CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

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### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

This study set out to explore the nexus between the war experience and subsequent political involvement of prominent White South African veterans in opposition politics from 1948 until 1961. There were three primary objectives. Firstly, how did the wartime experiences of these ex-servicemen shape their political disposition? How did the war act as a catalyst in directing them towards a career in politics? Secondly, did a sense of solidarity, created by shared combat, contribute toward their decision to become involved in post-war politics? Lastly, how did ex-servicemen influence the wider political discourse during this period?

Bourdieu's capital theory was used as a theoretical framework to map the differing types of influence that wartime participation might have had on the ex-servicemen. Using Bourdieu's concept of habitus, the study explored the war's impact on the political views of the ex-servicemen. His concept of forms of capital, and specifically social capital, brought the resilience and utility of the ex-servicemen's wartime loyalties into focus. Memoirs, autobiographies, biographies, and interviews were used extensively to give substance (*geist*) to the drier statistics emanating from the prosopography of the 153 ex-servicemen identified for this study.

Chapter One contextualised the period from the declaration of war in September 1939 through to the declaration of the Republic in May 1961. Chapter Two, focused on the early life dispositions of the sample group, highlighted their ethnolinguistic, educational occupational, and generational profiles. Chapter Three covered their war experiences with a specific focus on their combat service, their individual military ranks, and prisoner-of-war (POW) status. The politicisation of the soldier by the Army Education Scheme (AES) and Springbok Legion (SL) was also discussed. Chapter Four dealt with the ex-servicemen's return to South Africa from the war front and their entry into politics during the immediate post-war years up to the general elections in 1953. Chapter 5 dealt with the period from the disbandment of the SL and the collapse of the Torch Commando (the Torch) in 1953 through to 1961, tracing the shift from mass ex-servicemen's organisations and identity to the role of individual veterans in politics. These chapters – Chapters 4 and 5 – elaborated on their influence in politics and the interaction of habitus, social capital and political involvement within their ex-servicemen's community. Both chapters covered the parliamentary and extra-parliamentary politics of the time, and juxtaposed the ex-servicemen's war experience against their subsequent political careers. Quite strikingly, how and to what extent, their decision to enter politics had separated them from the 'ordinary' soldiers, who had returned to a quiet, more settled post-war life, was revealed.

## 6.2 TOWARDS A TYPOLOGY OF EX-SERVICEMEN IN POLITICS

The study traced the lives of 153 ex-servicemen, from their early lives through to the end of the Union of South Africa in 1961. The 153 ex-servicemen were selected because they entered politics after the war. Previous studies have suggested a general disinterest in politics among returned ex-servicemen. This study, however, by focusing on those that became entangled in politics after 1945, reveals a unique sub-set of ex-servicemen. The intersection between post-war political formations and the factors that formed political habitus – such as cultural background, military experience and class (including education and occupation) – reveals the possible formation of numerous political ex-serviceman typologies or clusters within a broader ex-servicemen's identity.

The emergence of three broad, partially overlapping political groupings between 1948 and 1961, were identified, namely the ex-servicemen involved in extra-parliamentary activities, who were predominantly liberal and radical in view; the ex-servicemen involved in parliamentary politics, who were dominated by servicemen in the United Party (UP); and finally, the ex-servicemen involved in the Torch. The Torch, for a brief period, brought the broad political spectrum of ex-servicemen together into one organisation by appealing to the ex-servicemen's identity.

### 6.2.1 Pre-war cultural habitus formation

The men who volunteered for wartime service in the Union Defence Force (UDF) were drawn from across the White community and reflected the political dispositions of the dominant cultural groups. Table 6.1 shows the distribution of the sample group of 153 servicemen in each political formation according to the dominant cultural group discussed in Chapter Two. White South African involvement in post-war politics, and particularly in opposition to the Nationalists, seems to reflect the demographics of Jan Smuts's support base before the war. In the selected group, over half were English-speaking, with Jews and Afrikaners accounting approximately equally for the remainder of the 153. This trend is most evident in the leadership of the Torch where, despite its appeal to the shared ex-serviceman identity, the English-speaking ex-servicemen dominated the leadership cadre, and pushed the Torch further left than the UP found acceptable. The UP, as the custodian of Smuts's 'South Africanism', had made every effort to continue with a policy of language parity, even in the face of declining Afrikaner support in the rural areas. Despite the waning of Afrikaner support for the party, the UP maintained a loyal Afrikaner constituency, which the splinter parties could not dilute. The need to appeal to the Afrikaans-speaking constituency persisted in parliamentary politics, with the leadership of the two more successful parliamentary parties remaining in the hands of Afrikaans ex-servicemen: Sir de Villiers Graaff (UP) and Jan Steytler (Progressive Party (PP)).



**Table 6.1: Ex-servicemen by political formation and cultural group (n=153)<sup>1321</sup>**

Political formation	Afrikaans	English	Jewish	Total
Percentage of sample	22%	52%	24%	100%
Torch Commando	12	40	12	64
SL	2	14	16	32
CPSA/SACP	1	9	8	18
SACOD	1	8	5	14
LP	1	2	1	4
LPSA	1	11	5	17
UFP	1	10	1	12
PP	4	4	2	10
UP	31	36	12	79

The PP, which split off from the UP in 1959, and the Labour Party (LP) reflected a similar ethno-linguistic distribution to that of the UP. Predictably, ex-servicemen in the Union Federal Party (UFP), a party promising protection for English-speaking interests, were predominantly English-speaking. The Liberal Party (LPSA), although predominantly English, had a strong representation of Jewish ex-servicemen, who accounted for almost a third of the group. Jewish representation was even more pronounced in the South African Congress of Democrats (SACOD), in the Communist Party (CPSA/SACP) and in the SL. The number and distribution of Jewish ex-servicemen across the political spectrum highlights the strength and diversity of the political activism within the Jewish community.

The Jewish community's contribution to the war effort and post-war politics far exceeded its size. Jewish representation in parliamentary politics ranged between 10 and 20 per cent of the ex-servicemen. In the left-wing and extra-parliamentary movements, between a third and a half of the ex-servicemen involved were Jewish. In contrast, in 1946 the Jewish population had reached 104,156 and constituted approximately 4.4 per cent of the white population of South Africa.<sup>1322</sup> Jewish prevalence in the left-leaning parties, especially in the radical movements, can be attributed to the strong socialist and working-class ethos that came with the Jews who had fled Eastern Europe at the start of the twentieth century. The Jewish influence manifested clearly in the SL, in the CPSA/SACP and later in Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK).

The preponderance of English-speakers in the sample does not suggest homogeneity of political opinions, but rather the opposite. Although in aggregate the English-speaking ex-servicemen were more liberal than their Afrikaans-speaking counterparts, this does not mean that individual English-

<sup>1321</sup> Table developed by Author from DOD Archive, PA; using religion as proxy. Where no religion was stated language was determined by consulting UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information, File 35, Biographies 1951-1976, and UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information, File 65 1 5 (part 2), General Election 1953 UP Candidates Information.

<sup>1322</sup> Shimoni, *Community and Conscience*, 2.

speaking ex-servicemen were not conservative. Certainly within the UP, language was not an accurate indicator of political leaning. Furthermore, to the left of the UP, the subtle differences of ideology between the various liberal and radical camps often meant that English-speaking ex-servicemen found themselves in different camps simultaneously. Small changes in policy positions would cause repeated 'defections' from one camp to one of the several others until government suppression lumped them all together.

Thus, although the exclusive identity politics of the NP may have contributed to the activism of English-speaking and Jewish ex-servicemen, the Afrikaans-speaking ex-servicemen in the sample indicate that the NP did not enjoy a political hegemony over the Afrikaans community or identity during the 1950s. The cultural diversity of ex-servicemen on the political scene suggests a strand of a 'South Africanist' identity within the ex-serviceman identity. This strand runs through the shared schooling and military service of the ex-servicemen.

### **6.2.2 The influence of socio-economic class on ex-servicemen**

Schooling, education and occupation are strong sources of social capital. Class affiliation may have contributed to the formation among ex-servicemen of a political typology that reinforced consistent class behaviour among the ex-servicemen in opposition politics. The influence of the 'old school tie' among ex-servicemen in politics indicates both the role of class privilege within South African society at the time, as well as the school system's ability to inculcate a sense of comradeship, duty, and service in the pupils. Tables 6.2 and 6.3 intersect the ex-servicemen's socio-economic class markers of schooling, education and occupation with the membership of a political party.

Table 6.2 compares the attendance of the schools identified in Chapter Two, with the membership of post-war political parties. Although the majority of the ex-servicemen who had attended the listed schools were members of the UP, there seems to be sufficient consistency in schooling across all parties to suggest that the prevalence of the dominant pre-war social hegemony based on duty and activism, that the schools reinforced, in all political formations. Thus, the influence of education on political affiliation suggests that schooling had the dual function of providing social capital and, in the case of liberal education, engendering a liberal disposition. Despite the radical left's working-class agenda and their strong association with the 'ordinary soldier', the radical left's leadership had a strong middle-class background.

**Table 6.2: Ex-servicemen's schooling and political formation (n=153)<sup>1323</sup>**

School	CPSA/ SACP	SACOD	LP	LPSA	UFP	PP	UP
Durban High School	-	-	-	1	1	-	4
Diocesan (Bishops)	1	-	-	1	1	1	3
KES	-	-	-	-	-	1	4
SACS	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
PBHS	-	-	-	2	-	1	3
Dale College	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
Ficksburg High School	-	-	-	1	-	1	3
Paarl Boys High School	-	-	-	-	-	2	4
Grey High School	-	-	1	1	-	-	2
Maritzburg College	1	1	1	1	2	-	-
Michealhouse	-	-	-	2	1	-	2
St John's College	-	-	-	-	1	-	2
Jeppe BHS	1	-	-	-	-	1	2
Hilton College	1	1	-	-	-	-	2
Grey's College	-	-	-	-	-	1	2
De Villers Graaff HS	1	1	-	-	-	1	1
Parktown Boys High	1	1	-	-	-	-	-
Rondebosch Boys High School	-	-	-	-	-	-	1

This middle-class status is also reflected in the post-war occupations of the ex-servicemen. Table 6.3 compares their post-war occupations to political party membership. Furthermore, post-matric qualifications, such as degrees, diplomas and military staff training, are listed by political party. The preponderance of middle-class occupations can be attributed to their access to education, afforded them by their pre-war social class, as well as the study opportunities they received on their return from the battlefronts. As a result, the majority of ex-servicemen in the selected group had had some tertiary education, which provided well-paying employment and the financial independence to pursue careers in politics. The extra-parliamentary radical movements, possibly due to their solidarity with the workers, had the lowest ratio of tertiary qualifications. The formal political parties, which appealed to the socially affluent (and the better-qualified sectors of the population) had enjoyed higher qualification levels. The LPSA members were the most qualified in academic terms. However, despite these subtle differences in education and occupation, Table 6.3 reveals that ex-servicemen involved in post-war politics were undoubtedly not working-class or 'ordinary', but that they had rather maintained well-paying occupations and had access to middle-class lifestyles.

<sup>1323</sup> Table developed by Author from DOD Archive, PA; UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information, File 35, Biographies 1951-1976; UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information, File 65 1 5 (part 2), General Election 1953 UP Candidates Information; *South African Who's Who 1948-1976*; 'Bishops War Record', 70-99; UNISA-UP Archives, UP Private Papers Sir de Villiers Graaff Papers (United Party Papers 1958-1977), File 1.15.11, 'United Party Personalities'; Illsely, *Pretoria Boys High*; Barret, 'A History of Michaelhouse, 1896-1952'; Armstrong, 'Strenue – Class Reunions November 2014'.

**Table 6.3: Ex-servicemen's post war occupational class by political formation (n=153)** <sup>1324</sup>

Political formation	Ex-service man in sample	Occupational class				Education	
		Professional	Intermediate	Skilled	unknown	Post-Matric Qualification	Unknown
Torch	64	20	28	12	4	41 (64%)	12
SL	32	8	12	11	1	16 (50%)	5
CPSA/ SACP	18	4	9	5	-	11 (61%)	2
SACOD	14	4	7	3	-	13 (93%)	1
LP	4	2	1	1	-	3 (75%)	1
LPSA	17	13	4	-	-	17 (100%)	-
UFP	12	6	5	1	-	10 (83%)	1
PP	10	7	2	1	-	10 (100%)	-
UP	79	38	27	13	1	65 (82%)	4

The majority of servicemen involved in post-war politics had grown up in an environment that embraced 'South Africanism' and a collective White identity. Their similar schooling and university experiences formed their disposition towards civic duty. By the end of demobilisation, they had firmly established themselves as part of the White South African middle-class. These experiences may have already provided them with a general foundation from which to launch a career in politics. However, the war had provided the catalyst for many to do so. The juxtaposition of their war experience with a rising Afrikaner nationalism may have created the context for their political action.

### 6.2.3 Influence of war experience on habitus and social capital in the political field

The involvement of ex-servicemen in the full spectrum of post-war opposition politics suggests a nexus between war experience and later political participation. Table 6.4 shows that the older officers among the ex-servicemen, with predominantly African campaign experience, clustered in the established and centralist UP. However, the different distribution of the veterans of the Italian campaign seems to indicate a relationship between the campaign in Italy and more liberal and radical political views. Participation in the Italian campaign had exposed servicemen to the potential of radical societal change, which may also have contributed to the increased numbers of veterans of this campaign in the liberal and radical left formations, especially those that came to the fore after 1953. Furthermore, in the Italian campaign, the soldier's age may have amplified the campaign's

<sup>1324</sup> Table compiled by Author from Table compiled by author from; DOD Archive, PA; Wits Historical Papers, Springbok Legion, A617; UNISA-UP Archive, UP Transvaal Province File 31.5.3; *Who is Who in Southern Africa 1948-1964*; UNISA-UP Archive, Central Head Office File 61 62 (Part 2) War Veteran Torch Commando; UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information file 158 (Part 1) War Veteran Torch Commando; UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information file 158 (Part 2) War Veteran Torch Commando; UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information, File 35, Biographies 1951-1976; UNISA-UP Archive, Sir De Villiers Graaff Papers, File 1.15.1 United Party Papers 1958-1977; Slovo, *Unfinished autobiography*; Kirkaldy, 'Very Ordinary Communists'; Carneson, *Red in the Rainbow*; Bernstein, *Memory Against Forgetting*; Lazerson, *Against the Tide*; Vigne, *Liberals Against Apartheid*; Lovell, *Love of Justice*.

influence on the serviceman's political disposition. Soldiers fighting in Italy were on average younger than their African campaign counterparts, and thus possibly more politically impressionable, which also suggests the possibility of a generational leftward shift among the ex-servicemen. In contrast, POW status stands out as a unique influence on the captured ex-servicemen. The intensity of the experience and the deep personal bonds formed in captivity is evident in Table 6.4.

**Table 6.4: Ex-servicemen's war experience by political formation (n=153)<sup>1325</sup>**

Political formation	Ex-servicemen in sample	War experience			
		Africa Star	Italy Star	POW	AES
Torch	64	43	23	12	6
SL	32	19	13	2	5
CPSA/SACP	18	10	9	-	3
SACOD	14	4	4	-	2
LP	4	3	-	1	1
LPSA	17	12	10	2	4
UFP	12	11	2	6	1
PP	10	5	3	1	2
UP	79	44	26	10	8

Prisoners of War (POW) accounted for over a tenth of the group, which suggests that despite being wary of involvement in party politics, they still opposed the NP government. After the collapse of the Torch in 1953, the former POWs among the sample found political homes in the UP and UFP. The POWs seem to have clustered around the leaders of these parties, suggesting personal loyalties. Former POWs tended to cluster around the leadership of a fellow former POW in the UP (Graaff) or the UFP (Gillie Ford). Thus, personal loyalties that developed during captivity may have motivated their political activism, in addition to the politicising effect of the war. In this regard, the POW experience provided the politically astute ex-servicemen with strong social linkages that could be used, even manipulated, later in their careers.

Table 6.4 also highlights the politicising influence the Army Education Scheme (AES) had on information officers. A clear overlap existed between the AES and the SL/CPSA. Furthermore, the AES, as a unifying liberal 'South Africanist' initiative, is evident in both the presence of former information officers in all opposition political formations and their particularly high concentration in

<sup>1325</sup> Table compiled by author from; DOD Archive, PA; Wits Historical Papers, Springbok Legion, A617; UNISA-UP Archive, UP Transvaal Province File 31.5.3; *Who is Who in Southern Africa 1948-1964*; UNISA-UP Archive, Central Head Office File 61 62 (Part 2) War Veteran Torch Commando; UP Archive, Division of Information file 158 (Part 1) War Veteran Torch Commando; UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information file 158 (Part 2) War Veteran Torch Commando; UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information, File 35, Biographies 1951-1976; UNISA-UP Archive, Sir De Villiers Graaff Papers, File 1.15.1 United Party Papers 1958-1977.

the LPSA. The AES may not have successfully politicised the 'ordinary soldier', but it did politically awaken the information officers involved.

Finally, Table 6.5 indicates the rank groupings of the ex-servicemen by political party and confirms that the social capital and stratification inherent in the military hierarchy translated into the post-war political choices of the ex-servicemen.

**Table 6.5: Membership of political formations by rank (n=153)<sup>1326</sup>**

Political formation	Generals	Senior Officers	Junior Officers	Warrant Officers	Senior NCO	Junior NCO	Unknown Rank
Torch	6	14	28	1	2	11	2
SL	-	-	12	2	3	12	3
CPSA/SACP	-	-	5	1	1	9	2
SACOD	-	-	5	-	-	7	2
LP	-	-	2	-	-	2	-
LPSA	-	3	4	1	1	8	-
UFP	1	2	6	-	1	2	-
PP	-	-	5	-	-	7	2
UP	4	21	43	1	2	5	3

Table 6.5 shows that the leftist parties and organisations tended to attract a higher proportion of junior officers and NCOs, which suggests that the disruption of civilian class and status that they had experienced in the military (which exposed them to robust cross-class interaction) had had a liberalising effect on the servicemen. The broadening of their political perspectives may have politicised them and may account for their willingness to question the established political structures after the war. By contrast, the stability and respectability of parliamentary politics, and the more centralist position of the UP, attracted the officers, and especially senior and general officers, who were part of the socio-political hegemony. They account for three-quarters of the ex-servicemen in the UP, the UFP and the PP. These ex-servicemen constituted the rump of opposition to the NP in Parliament in the post-war years.

#### 6.2.4 Long term influence of the war on parliamentarians

The presence of ex-servicemen in Parliament best illustrates the enduring influence of the war on the established political structures of White South Africa. Table 6.6 shows the military experience of ex-servicemen parliamentarians for the 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Parliaments. The involvement and prominence of ex-servicemen in parliamentary politics clearly shows that the ex-servicemen did not

<sup>1326</sup> Table compiled by author from; DOD Archive, PA; Wits Historical Papers, Springbok Legion, A617; UNISA-UP Archive, UP Transvaal Province File 31.5.3; *Who is Who in Southern Africa 1948-1964*; UNISA-UP Archive, Central Head Office File 61 62 (Part 2) War Veteran Torch Commando; UP Archive, Division of Information file 158 (Part 1) War Veteran Torch Commando; UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information file 158 (Part 2) War Veteran Torch Commando; UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information, File 35, Biographies 1951-1976; UNISA-UP Archive, Sir De Villiers Graaff Papers, File 1.15.1 United Party Papers 1958-1977.



retreat from politics after the war, but rather gained traction. Furthermore, it confirms again that ex-servicemen transferred their social capital accrued during the war, from the military field to the political field.

**Table 6.6: Ex-serviceman parliamentarians by rank (n=153)<sup>1327</sup>**

Rank	10 <sup>th</sup> Parliament 1948-1952	11 <sup>th</sup> Parliament 1953-1958	12 <sup>th</sup> Parliament 1958- 1961
General <sup>1328</sup>	-	-	1
Colonel	2	2	1
Lieutenant Colonel	1	1	1
Major	2	2	3
Captain	5	6	6
Lieutenant	3	3	6
Unknown	1	1	2
Sergeant	1	1	1
Corporal	-	2	1
LCpl	-	-	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>23</b>

Table 6.7 shows the military experience of the parliamentarians from 1948 until 1961. The figures confirm the previous observations regarding the relationship between campaign experience and participation in post-war parliamentary politics. Furthermore, the emergence of the veterans of the Italian campaign in politics in later years is evident, despite the involvement of former POWs in political parties and veteran movements as indicated in Table 6.4 above. The former POWs seem to have been unsuccessful in reaching Parliament, which creates the impression that they had withdrawn from politics as a group, except for Graaff and Gray-Hughes.

**Table 6.7: War experience of ex-serviceman parliamentarians (n=153)<sup>1329</sup>**

War experience	10 <sup>th</sup> Parliament 1948-1952	11 <sup>th</sup> Parliament 1953-1958	12 <sup>th</sup> Parliament 1958- 1961
<b>Africa Star</b>	8	8	15
<b>Italy Star</b>	1	3	8
<b>POW</b>	2	2	3
<b>AES</b>	-	3	3

Table 6.8 shows the cultural background of the ex-serviceman parliamentarians. Despite the UP's careful placing of the two dominant language groups within the party, Table 6.8 would seem to indicate the low esteem the Afrikaans-speaking voter generally held for wartime military service, by the low numbers of Afrikaans-speaking ex-serviceman parliamentarians. Graaff's belief that his

<sup>1327</sup> *South African Who's Who 1948-1977*; DOD Archive, PA.

<sup>1328</sup> Brigadier James Durrant attained the rank of Major General during the war and had been reduced to the peacetime rank of Brigadier.

<sup>1329</sup> *South African Who's Who 1948-1977*; DOD Archive, PA.

social and military background could secure him the Afrikaans-speaker votes was thus seemingly misplaced.

**Table 6.8: Ethno-linguistic groups of ex-serviceman parliamentarians (n=153)<sup>1330</sup>**

<b>Ethno-linguistic group</b>	<b>10<sup>th</sup> Parliament 1948-1952</b>	<b>11<sup>th</sup> Parliament 1953-1958</b>	<b>12<sup>th</sup> Parliament 1958- 1961</b>
Afrikaans-speaking	1	3	8
English-speaking	10	13	12
Jewish	4	3	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>23</b>

Interestingly, Table 6.8 reveals that although English-speaking ex-servicemen accounted for the majority of ex-serviceman parliamentarians during the 1950s, there was a relative decrease in both English-speaking and Jewish parliamentarians as opposed to their Afrikaans-speaking colleagues. Although only slight, it does suggest that significant changes occurred in South Africa's socio-political demographics during the 1950s, a precursor to the English-speaking and Jewish communities' gradual detachment from parliamentary politics in the following decades.

### 6.3 FINDINGS

A generic typology of the ex-servicemen in politics, being ex-servicemen who were well-educated and held predominantly professional and intermediate level occupations, is proposed. Although war service may have politicised and, to an extent perhaps, liberalised the soldier, these ex-servicemen had already come from home and educational environments that had made them disposed to liberal ideals. Despite the radical-left, extra-parliamentary groupings having had slightly less affluent occupations than their liberal, progressive and moderate parliamentary counterparts, there remains a consistency of class within the broader sample.

Apart from creating a sense of solidarity around the ex-serviceman identity, war service allowed soldiers to question the dominant political discourse in South Africa. Where war experiences disrupted and dislocated the dominant racial and class structures, similar dislocation occurred in the ex-serviceman's pre-war habitus, making them prone to adopt more liberal and even radical views. Where middle-class volunteers had accepted enlisted ranks, new perspectives on class and privilege had confronted them, which dislodged their pre-war political perspectives. Exposure to the destructive powers of warfare and the excesses of authoritarian regimes, especially in the Italian campaign, reinforced their loathing for fascism in any form. Participation in the Italian campaign, more than the African campaigns, seems to have nudged ex-servicemen towards leftist beliefs. The juxtaposition of the liberal opinions formed by the ex-servicemen with the fascist perspectives that festered at home, especially after the 1948 elections, acted as a catalyst to mobilise ex-servicemen

<sup>1330</sup> *South African Who's Who 1948-1977*; DOD Archive, PA.

to action. Thus, where societal disruption was acute, ex-servicemen experienced political awakening or, in some cases, reawakening.

The two explicit attempts to politicise soldiers during the war (through the SL and the AES) seem to have had only a fleeting impact on the 'ordinary' soldier, who quickly returned to civil society after the war. However, these two organisations did have a persistent and permanent impact on the servicemen actively involved in these structures. A tightly-knit core of legionnaires remained in the Legion after the war and sustained it for almost a decade before continuing together in radical politics and armed struggle. The AES officers were also over-represented in politics in terms of numbers. Their greater involvement in the liberal and progressive politics stands testimony to the enduring impact this initiative had had on them.

Thus, war experience had prompted these ex-servicemen's political careers. It gave them a sense of agency and enriched them with social capital. However, the evidence suggests that the war had varied success in liberalising the ex-servicemen and, in many cases, strengthened pre-war 'South Africanist' perspectives. Within the typology of the politically-exposed ex-servicemen there existed various clusters or strata derived from the differences in political views (*habitus*) of these one-time, volunteer soldiers. Thus, the typology is based rather on the sense of agency and obligation awakened by military service, the social capital derived from being identified as an ex-serviceman and an inarticulate loathing of fascism, than any particular political perspective.

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Adjutant General (3) 154	Box 78	'General Election, 1943. <i>'Ninth Parliament of the Union of South Africa'</i>
Minister van Verdediging Erasmus/Fouché (MVEF)128	MV118	'Lys Opgestel Deur Die Beredderaar Ingevolge Artikel 4(1) van Die Wet Op Die Onderdrukking van Communisms, 1950 (Wet No.44 van 1950) van Persone Wat Ampsdraers, Beampstes, Lede of Aktiewe Ondersteuners Is of Was van Die Kommunistiese Party van Suid-Africa'.
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P1/12284	Leo Kowarsky	'Leo Kowarsky, The Progressive Party Candidate for Ward 24'.
P1/2535/1	Cmdt ND Mc Millian VD (MP)	Step in Rank: Cmdt N.D. McMillan, Vd (MP). Reserve of Officers Dated 8 October 1954'.
V612846	RI Arenstein	
B202685	JAL Basson	
V583213	TVR Beard	
V190486	C Bekker	
66440	GM Berlyn	
240330	AZ Berman	
V316117	DEM Berman	

V226959	PAB Beyleveld
V191376	AF Bovell
V53305	GA Brathwaite
PF240281	GE Brink
P102580	HJ Bronkhorst
208824	AID Brown
V27544	VCH Brown
V232524	PB Brown
V580073	BP Bunting
V562710	RM Cadman
185632	C Cannin
V117392	F Carneson
73266	JB Chutter
V14826	VJ Clapham
V544968	P Cohen
V14476	WS Conradie
V230389	MM Corbett
V558751	H Couzyn
V42821	AH Coy
V89573	WM Crook
V242551	T Cross
V179949	RC Dagge
V612108	TRH Davenport
V17839	JI de Villiers
V611604	WH dE Deacon
V173596	GT Du Preez
f46301	PD Dunning
V178320	GH Durrant
V159803	CW Eglin
V327821	DA Etheredge
1482	DG Fannin
V6320	RM Fenhalls
V103113	EG Ford
45009	IS Fourie
V279206	G Gordon
110116	D Graaff
V205996	WH Greeff
V26080	HH Greenwood

V582286	WV Hain
P131936	WF Hamilton
V203491	J Hamilton Russel
f268744	JEG Hasting Beck (ne de Villiers)
V579915	MKS Hathorn
V614	CC henderson
V2033214	BH Henwood
V582098	CK Hill
178459	PJ Hodgson
V123846	JL Horak
114776	TG Hughes
V97542	HG Hurford
3605	EB Isaacs
143095	JL Isacowitz
V6747	GF Jacobs
V179837	EA Joseph
f268727	HBM Joseph
V251556	MM Kagan
V28477	L Kane-Berman
27426	D Katzeff
9253	WG Kingwill
V34408	W Kodesh
V78405	AL Kowarsky
V179207	L Kuper
V123895	DE Lang
V152845	JGF Lang
V143423	EWC Lardner-Burke
V180190	LB Lee-Warden
V203528	I Lehr
1469	KG L'Estrange
V102719	JE Lindsay
V607925	AR Lipman
V223956	L Lovell
15056	JP Marais
V45011	LH Marquard
2305	AC Martin
36265	RH Mason
47319	MCE McDonald



V232856	KHC McIntyre
V1001	ND McMillan
V3583	H Meidner
V240963	H Miller
87391	J Mitchell-Baker
V4609	JC Moll
V203443	PA Moore
V107672	J Morely-Turner
V45576	P Mouton
V14208	LG Murray
62289	G Nicholson
V558775	JPdM Niehaus
V208957	JJ O'Meara
V179832	H Oppenheimer
V126339	RS Parrot
V337517	D Pinshow
V96216	J Podbrey
V128152	JD Pretorius
P1/6826	JD Pretorius
V185378	WV Raw
V590563	GH Relly
V127953	AEP Robinson
78386	DG Ross
V330237	GG Routh
V3677	LI Rubin
V102269	AS Ruffel
V251285	J Sachs
V178793	IF Schermbrucker
V543198	H Schwarz
V107101	RD Sive
V592832	CG Starke
V176486	JA vA Steytler
V12010	WJ Steytler
V110099	HC Stofberg
V110744	JS Stuttford
V313898	RG Taverner
32706	ES Thompson
253744	HA Tothill

V45006	RP van Biljon
V262242	A van der Spuy
P56	KR van der Spuy
14660	HA van Hoogstraten
12205	CJS Wainwright
103374	FW Waring
V563038	CG Williams
32489	JD Wilson
V558765	RC Wilson

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A2242	Hackland	'Interview with Colin Eglin by B Hackland'.
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A2242	Hackland	'Interview with Harry Schwarz by B Hackland'.
A2242	Hackland	'Interview with Vause Raw by B Hackland'.
A2242	Hackland	'Interview with Sir De Villiers Graaff by B Hackland'.
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A617	Springbok Legion	'Minutes of the Action Committee Meeting Held on Friday 12th August 1949, at Main House 196 Main Street, Johannesburg'.
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File 158 (Part 1)	War Veteran Torch Commando	'A Few Remarks of Problems at Present Facing the WVAC'.
File 158 (Part 1)	War Veteran Torch Commando	'Letter from AG Malan to H F Oppenheimer Dated 12 May 1951'.
File 158 (Part 1)	War Veteran Torch Commando	'Letter from V Clapham to Marais Steyn Dated 10th May 1951'.
File 158 (Part 1)	War Veteran Torch Commando	'Rough Notes on Meeting of the Johannesburg War Veterans Action Committee held on Thursday, 7 <sup>th</sup> June, 1951'.
File 158 (Part 1)	War Veteran Torch Commando	'Letter from J Lang to AL Kowarsky, Esq. Dated 3rd February 1955'.
File 158 (Part 2)	War Veteran Torch Commando	War Veterans Organisation: Paper Submitted by Group Captain AG Malan Dated 25 June 1951'.
File 35	Biographies 1951-1976	Various Biographies used in the data set. Biography cited in text: 'Biography of United Party Candidate for General Elections 1958: Jan Daniel Pretorius'.
File 65 1 5 (Part 2)	General Election 1953 UP Candidates Information	Various Biographies used in the data set. Biographies cited in text: 'Biography of United Party Candidate for General Elections 1953: Willem Johannes Steytler'. 'Biography of United Party Candidate for General Elections 1953: Noel Douglas McMillian'.

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## APPENDIX: LIST OF EX-SERVICEMEN CONSIDERED IN THE PROSOPROGRAPHIC STUDY

Personal Details				Attestation for War Service		Theatre/ Campaign Medals and POW status						Discharge Details		Participation in Veteran Political Organisations and Political Careers			Biographic Material Memoirs, Biographies, Autobiographies and Interviews
Service Number	Initials	Surname	Year of Birth	Year	rank	Arm of Service	Africa Star	Italy Star	other Campaign Stars	British Defence Medal	POW	Year	Rank	Veteran Organisation	Political Party	Member of Parliament	
	KC	Acutt	1909	1940		Air Force	X	X						Torch			
V612846	RI	Arenstein	1918	1944	Pte	Army						1947	Pte	SL	CPSA, SACOD		
	R	Badenhorst Durrant	1914	1939		Army	X					1944			UP	1951-1961	
B202685	JAL	Basson	1913	1939	Lt	Army						1943	Capt		UP	1958-1961	
V583213	TVR	Beard	1926	1944	Pte	Army		X				1946	Pte		LPSA		
V190486	C	Bekker	1916	1942	Lt	Air Force						1945	Lt	Torch	UP		
66440	GM	Berlyn	1908	1939	Lt Navy	Navy			Altantic, Burma			1945	Lt Navy	Torch			
240330	AZ	Berman	1893	1940	Lt	Army	X	X				1945	Maj		UP		
V316117	DEM	Berman	1921	1943	Pte	Army	X	X		X		1946	LCpl	SL	CPSA		
	BJ	Burgers	1922	1939		Army	X	X					Maj		UP		
	L	Bernstein	1920	1943	Pte	Army		X				1946	Pte	SL	CPSA, SACP, SACOD		Bernstein, L. <i>Memory against Forgetting</i> ; 'Interview by Terri Barnes'
V226959	PAB	Beyleveld	1916	1941	Pte	Army	X			X		1946	Pte	SL, Torch	LP		'Interview with Piet Beyleveld by David Everatt'
V191376	AF	Bovell	1896	1940	2Lt	Army						1946	Capt	Torch			
	JR	Bowring	1899	1939	Lt Col	Army						1945	Col	Torch	UP		
V53305	GA	Brathwaite	1913	1940	2Lt	Army	X					1944	Lt	Torch	UFP		
	RV	Brickhill	1922	1940	Pte	Army	X				X		Cpl	Torch	LP, UFP		
639617/ PF240281	GE	Brink	1889	1939	Brig Gen	Army	X					1948	Lt Gen	Torch	UP		Birkby, C. <i>Uncle George</i> .

Personal Details				Attestation for War Service		Theatre/ Campaign Medals and POW status						Discharge Details		Participation in Veteran Political Organisations and Political Careers			Biographic Material Memoirs, Biographies, Autobiographies and Interviews
Service Number	Initials	Surname	Year of Birth	Year	rank	Arm of Service	Africa Star	Italy Star	other Campaign Stars	British Defence Medal	POW	Year	Rank	Veteran Organisation	Political Party	Member of Parliament	
P102580	HJ	Bronkhorst	1906	1939	Lt Col	Air Force	X		Burma				Brig		UP	1960-1961	
208824	AID	Brown	1910	1941	Sgt	Air Force	X					1946	Lt		UP	1958-1959	
V27544	VCH	Brown	1915	1940	Pte	Army	X				X	1945	Lt	SL, Torch			
V232524	PB	Brown	1924	1942	Pte	Army	X	X		X		1946	Pte		LPSA		Cardo, M. <i>Opening Men's Eyes</i> ; 'Interview with Dr Peter Brown conducted by Prof Norman Bromberger'
580073	BP	Bunting	1920	1943	Cpl	Air Force		X		X		1945	Lt	SL	CPSA, SACP	1953	'Interview with Brian Bunting by Don Pinnock'
562710	RM	Cadman	1924	1942	SLt	Navy			Burma			1945	SLt		UP		Mouton FA. <i>Iron in the Soul</i>
185632	C	Canin	1906	1940	Cpl	Army	X					1942	Sgt	SL			
V117392	F	Carneson	1920	1940	Pte	Army	X	X				1945	Pte	SL	CPSA, SACP		Carneson, L. <i>Red in the Rainbow</i> ; 'Interview with F Carneson by J Fredrikse'; 'Interview with Fred Carneson by David Everatt'
73266	JB	Chutter	1904	1940	Capt	Army	X				X	1945	Cpln	Torch	UFP		Chutter, JB. <i>Captivity Captive</i>
V14826	VJ	Clapham	1913	1940	Pte	Army		X				1946	Lt	SL, Torch	UP		
V544968	P	Cohen	1921	1944	Lt	Army						1946	Capt	SL	CPSA, SACOD		
V14476	WS	Conradie	1917	1940	Cpl	Army	X	X				1946	Sgt	Torch	UFP		
V230389	MM	Corbett	1923	1942	2Lt	Army		X		X		1945	Lt	Torch			
V558751	H	Couzyn	1896	1942	2Lt	Army		X				1946	Maj		UP		
V42821	AH	Coy	1902	1939	Capt	Army	X		Burma	X		1945	Brig	Torch			
V89573	WM	Crook	1916	1940	Lt	Army	X				X	1945	Lt		UP		
V242551	T	Cross	1920	1941	Pte	Army				X		1946	Pte	SL			
V179949	RC	Dagge	1898	1939	Capt	Army	X	X		X		1946	Lt Col	Torch			

Personal Details				Attestation for War Service		Theatre/ Campaign Medals and POW status						Discharge Details		Participation in Veteran Political Organisations and Political Careers			Biographic Material Memoirs, Biographies, Autobiographies and Interviews
Service Number	Initials	Surname	Year of Birth	Year	rank	Arm of Service	Africa Star	Italy Star	other Campaign Stars	British Defence Medal	POW	Year	Rank	Veteran Organisation	Political Party	Member of Parliament	
V612108	TRH	Davenport	1926	1945	Sgt	Army		X				1946	Pte	Torch	LPSA		
V17839	JI	de Villiers	1916	1940	2Lt	Army						1943	Lt		UP		
V611604	WH dE	Deacon	1926	1944	Pte	Army		X				1946	Pte		UP		
	J	Dormehl	1922	1939		Army	X	X							UP		
V173596	GT	Du Preez	1910	1940	Sgt	Army	X					1947	Lt		UP		
f46301	PD	Dunning	1917	1940	Maj	Air Force	X					1943	Lt Col	Torch			
V178320	GH	Durrant	1913	1940	Cpl	Air Force	X					1945	Capt	Torch	UFP		
	JT	Durrant	1913	1939	Capt	Air Force	X		Far East				Maj Gen	Torch	UP, UFP		
V159803	CW	Eglin	1925	1943	Pte	Army		X				1943	LCpl	Torch	UP,PP	1958-1961	Eglin, C. <i>Crossing the Borders of Power</i> ; Mouton FA. <i>Iron in the Soul</i> , 'Interview with Colin Eglin by B Hackland'
V327821	DA	Etheredge	1921	1942	SSgt	Air Force	X	X		X		1946	Capt	SL, Torch			
	DB	Evans	1900	1940		Army						1943	Lt		UP		
1482	DG	Fannin	1907	1940	Lt	Army	X				X	1945	Capt	Torch	UP		
V6320	RM	Fenhalls	1914	1940	Pte	Air Force	X	X				1945	2Lt	Torch	UP		
	EL	Fisher	1906	1939		Army						1945			UP	1958-1961	
V103113	EG	Ford	1915	1940	2Lt	Air Force	X				X	1945	2Lt	Torch	UFP		
45009	IS	Fourie	1898	1940	Lt	Army						1941	Capt		UP,PP	1953-1961	
	B	Friedman	1896	1939	Maj	Army							Maj		UP,PP	1946-1955	
	HG	Gericke	1920	1941	2Lt	Air Force		X				1945	Lt		UP		



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	H	Gluckman	1893	1941	Col	Army							Col		UP	1939-1957	Gluckman, H. <i>Abiding Values</i>
	L	Goldman	1915	1939	Lt	Army	X							SL, Torch			
V279206	G	Gordon	1909	1941	Sgt	Army	X					1945	Capt	Torch	LPSA		
110116	D	Graaff	1913	1940	WO	Army	X				X	1945	Capt		UP	1949-1957, 1959-1961	Graaff, D. <i>Div Looks Back</i> ; Mouton FA. <i>Iron in the Soul</i> ; 'Interview with Sir De Villiers Graaff by B Hackland'
V205996	WH	Greeff	1918	1941	2Lt	Air Force	X	X				1945	Lt	Torch	UP		
V26080	HH	Greenwood	1912	1939	Capt	Army	X	X			X	1946	Lt Col	Torch			
V582286	WV	Hain	1924	1943	Pte	Army	X	X				1946	Pte		LPSA		Hain, P. <i>Ad and Wal</i>
P131936	WF	Hamilton	1916	1941	Sgt	Army							2Lt	Torch	UFP		
V203491	J	Hamilton Russel	1904	1941	2Lt	Air Force	X					1943	Lt		UP,PP	1946-1961	
f268744	JEG	Hasting Beck (ne de Villiers)	1916	1942	2Lt	Air Force						1945	Lt		UP,PP		
V579915	MKS	Hathorn	1922	1942	Pte	Army						1946	Pte	SL	SACOD		
V614	CC	henderson	1913	1940	Lt	Army	X					1943	Lt	Torch	UP		
V2033214	BH	Henwood	1899	1940	Capt	Air Force		X				1945	Capt		UP	1949-1961	
V582098	CK	Hill	1920	1942	Pte	Army						1945	SSgt		LPSA		
178459	PJ	Hodgson	1910	1940	Pte	Army	X					1943	Pte	SL, Torch	CPSA, SACOD		
V123846	JL	Horak	1917	1941	Lt	Army	X	X				1945	Capt		UP	1958-1961	
114776	TG	Hughes	1909	1940	Pte	Army	X				X	1945	Sgt		UP	1949-1961	
V97542	HG	Hurford	1902	1940	LCpl	Air Force	X			X		1945	WO II	SL			
3605	EB	Isaacs	1900	1940	2Lt	Army	X					1943	maj		UP		

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143095	JL	Isacowitz	1915	1940	Pte	Army	X					1945	WO	SL, Torch	LPSA,CPSA		Isacowitz, R. <i>Telling People What They Do Not Want to Hear</i>
V6747	GF	Jacobs	1922	1939	LCpl	Army	X		Burma, France, Germany	X			Maj		UP		Jacobs, G. <i>Beckoning Horizons</i>
V179837	EA	Joseph	1909	1940	Lt	Air Force	X	X				1945	Capt	SL, Torch			
f268727	HBM	Joseph	1905	1942	Lt	Air Force						1946	Lt		LP,SACOD		Joseph, H. <i>Side by side: The autobiography of Helen Joseph</i>
V251556	MM	Kagan	1909	1942	Cpl	Army	X	X		X		1946	Sgt	SL			
28477	L	Kane-Berman	1905	1939	Lt	Army	X	X		X		1945	Maj	Torch	UFP		Kane-Berman, J. <i>Between Two Fires</i>
27426	D	Katzeff	1907	1940	Pte	Army	X				X	1945	Pte	SL, Torch			
9253	WG	Kingwill	1915	1940	Lt	Army	X				X	1945	Capt		UP		
V34408	W	Kodesh	1918	1940	Pte	Army	X	X		X		1945	Cpl	SL	CPSA, SACP, SACOD		'Interview with Wolfie Kodesh by J Fredrikse'
V78405	AL	Kowarsky	1917	1940	2Lt	Army	X				X	1946	maj	Torch	UP,PP	1958	
V179207	L	Kuper	1908	1941	Sgt	Army	X					1946	Lt		LPSA		
V123895	DE	Lang	1915	1940	CO	Army	X	X	France and Germany	X		1945	maj		LPSA		
V152845	JGF	Lang	1922	1941	Pte	NAvy	X	X				1945	Pte	Torch	LPSA		
V143423	EWC	Lardner-Burke	1916	1940	Pte	Air Force	X	X		X		1946	Lt	Torch			
	GSP	Le Roux	1906	1943		Army						1945	Lt		UP	1958-1961	
V180190	LB	Lee-Warden	1913	1940	Pte	Army	X			X		1945	Cpl	Torch	SACOD	1955-1960	'Memoirs Len Lee-Warden'
85774/ V203528	I	Lehr	1903	1940	Cpl	Air Force		X				1947	Capt		UP		
1469	KG	L'Estrange	1916	1940	Lt	Army	X				X	1945	Lt		UP		

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V102719	JE	Lindsay	1918	1939	2Lt	Air Force	X	X			X	1952	Capt		UP		
V607925	AR	Lipman	1925	1944		Air Force						1945		SL	CPSA,SACOD		
V223956	L	Lovell	1907	1940	SSgt	Air Force	X					1944	Capt	SL	LP	1950-1957	Lovell, L. <i>For the Love of Justice</i>
	AG	Malan	1905	1939	Lt	Air Force			Air Crew Europe				Col	Torch			Franks, N. <i>Sky Tiger</i> , Walker, O. <i>Sailor Malan</i>
15056	JP	Marais	1900	1940	Maj	Army						1943	Maj	Torch	UP		Venter, C. 'Majoor, J.P. Marais: Die Skepper van Klipdrif Brandewyn'
V45011	LH	Marquard	1897	1940	Lt	Army	X					1945	Lt Col		LPSA		
2305	AC	Martin	1892	1940	Maj	Army	X				X	1945	Maj		UFP		
36265	RH	Mason	1907	1940	2Lt	Army	X				X	1945	Lt	Torch	UP,UFP		
47319	MCE	McDonald	1914	1940	Lt	Air Force	X					1946	Capt		UP		
232856	KHC	McIntyre	1917	1943	Pte	Army		X				1946	Pte	Torch	LPSA		
V1001	ND	McMillan	1897	1940	Lt Col	Army	X					1945	Lt Col	Torch	UP	1949-1957	
V3583	H	Meidner	1914	1940	Pte	Army	X	X		X	X	1945	Cpl		LPSA		
V240963	H	Miller	1907	1940	Sgt	Air Force	X					1944	Lt		UP	1958-1961	
87391	J	Mitchell-Baker	1878	1939	Col	Army						1947	Maj Gen	Torch	UP		
V4609	JC	Moll	1920	1940	Pte	Army	X	X				1945	Sgt		UP		
V203443	PA	Moore	1891	1940	Lt	Army						1944	Maj		UP	1950-1961	
V107672	J	Morely-Turner	1900	1940	Sgt	Army	X					1943	Sgt	SL	CPSA		
V45576	P	Mouton	1902	1939	Pte	Army	X					1945	WO II		UP		
V14208	LG	Murray	1911	1940	Lt	Army	X	X				1946	Maj		UP		
62289	G	Nicholson	1918	1940	Pte	Army	X			X		1945	Pte	Torch			
V558775	JP dM	Niehaus	1910	1943	Lt	Army	X	X		X		1945	Lt		UP		

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	HFB	Oelrich	1910	1939		Army						1945	Lt	Torch	UP		
V208957	JJ	O'Meara	1914	1941	SSgt	Air Force	X	X		X		1945	Lt	SL	CPSA		
V179832	H	Oppenheimer	1908	1940	Lt	Army	X					1943	Capt		UP	1949-1957	Hocking, A. <i>Oppenheimer and Son</i>
V126339	RS	Parrot	1919	1939	Sgt	Army	X	X		X		1945	Maj	Torch	UP,PP		
	RD	Pilkington-Jordan	1893	1939	Col	Army						1944	Col		UP	1950-1958	
V337517	D	Pinshow	1920	1942	2Lt	Air Force						1945	Lt	SL, Torch			
V96216	J	Podbrey	1923	1940	Pte	Air Force	X					1945	Pte	SL	CPSA		
V128152	JD	Pretorius	1916	1940	Capt	Air Force	X			X		1947	Maj	Torch	UP		
P1/6826	JD	Pretorius	1912	1939	Capt	Air Force	X					1953	Col		UP		
	HJO	Prinsloo	1906	1939	Maj	Army	X	X				1948	Maj	Torch	UP		
	HF	Prinsloo	1890	1939	Col	Army							Col		UP		
V185378	WV	Raw	1921	1940	SSgt	Army	X	X				1945	Lt	Torch	UP	1958-1961	'Interview with Vause Raw by B Hackland'
V590563	GH	Relly	1926	1944	LCpl	Army		X				1945	LCpl		UP		
V127953	AEP	Robinson	1915	1940	2Lt	Army	X					1943	Lt		UP	1949-1952	
78386	DG	Ross	1902	1940	Lt	Army	X					1942	Lt		UP	1958-1961	
V330237	GG	Routh	1916	1943	Lt	Army						1945	Lt	SL	CPSA,SACOD		
V3677	LI	Rubin	1909	1940	LCpl	Army	X	X		X		1946	Lt	Torch	LPSA		
V102269	AS	Ruffel	1915	1940	Lt	Air Force	X				X	1945	Lt	Torch			
V251285	J	Sachs	1915	1940	Sgt	Army				X		1945	Capt	SL			
V178793	IF	Schermbrucker	1921	1940	Pte	Army	X	X				1945	Pte	SL	SACP, CPSA		Kirkaldy, A. 'Very Ordinary Communists: The Life of

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																	Ivan and Lesley Schermbrucker'
V543198	H	Schwarz	1924	1943	2Lt	Air Force		X		X		1945	Lt	Torch	UP		'Interview with Harry Schwarz by B Hackland'
V107101	RD	Sive	1913	1940	Lt	Army	X	X		X		1946	Capt	Torch	UP		
	YM	Slovo	1926	1943	Pte	Army		X						SL	CPSA,SACOD		Slovo, J. <i>Slovo: The Unfinished Autobiography</i> ; 'Interview with Joe Slovo by J Fredrickse'
	WP	Stanford	1916	1940		Air Force	X	X				1945	Lt Col		LPSA,PP	1955-1961	
V592832	CG	Starke	1902	1944	Pte	Army		X				1946	Cpl		UP	1953-1957	
V176486	JA vA	Steytler	1910	1940	Lt	Army	X					1944	Capt		UP,PP	1953-1961	'Interview with Dr Jan Steytler by B Hackland'
V12010	WJ	Steytler	1906	1940	Lt	Army				X		1944	Lt	Torch	UP,PP		
V110099	HC	stofberg	1893	1940	Maj	Army						1945	Lt Col		UP		
	RHL	Strachan	1925	1943		Air Force						1945	Lt		LPSA,SACOD		Strachan, H. <i>Make a Skyf, Man!</i>
V110744	JS	Stuttaford	1913	1940	2Lt	Army		X				1944	Lt		UP		
V313898	RG	Taverner	1924	1941	Pte	Army				X		1946	Sgt	Torch			
32706	ES	Thompson	1895	1939	Capt	Army	X				X	1945	Lt Col	Torch			
253744	HA	Tothill	1888	1940		Army						1943	Capt		UP	1939-1952	
V45006	RP	van Biljon	1904	1940	Lt	Army						1946	Capt		UP		
V262242	A	van der Spuy	1913	1941	Capt	Army		X		X		1945	Capt		UP		
P56	KR	van der Spuy	1892	1939	Brig Gen	Army						1946	Brig	Torch			Van der Spuy, KR. <i>Chasing the Wind</i>
14660	HA	van Hoogstraten	1911	1940	Capt	Army	X				X	1945	Maj		UP		
12205	CJS	wainwright	1917	1940	Pte	Army	X					1943	Cpl		UP		

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103374	FW	Waring	1908	1940	2Lt	Air Force						1942	Lt		UP	1947-1957	
V563038	CG	Williams	1909	1942	SLt	Navy		X				1946	SLt	SL, Torch	CPSA,SACOD		
32489	JD	Wilson	1913	1940	Pte	Army	X				X	1945	Pte	Torch	UFP,LPSA		
V558765	RC	Wilson	1882	1942	Col	Army						1947	Maj Gen	Torch			

Table developed by the Author from DOD Archive, Personnel Archive (PA); DOD Archive, Minister of Defence - Erasmus/Fouché (MVEF) 128, 'Lys Opgestel Deur Die Beredderaar Ingevolge Artikel 4(1) van Die Wet Op Die Onderdrukking van Communisms, 1950 (Wet No.44 van 1950) van Persone Wat Ampsdraers, Beamptes, Lede of Aktiewe Ondersteuners Is of Was van Die Kommunistiese Party van Suid-Afrika'; UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information, File 35, Biographies 1951-1976; UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information, File 65 1 5 (part 2), General Election 1953 UP Candidates' Information; UNISA-UP Archives, UP Private Papers Sir De Villiers Graaff Papers (United Party Papers 1958-1977), File 1.15.11, 'United Party Personalities'; UNISA-UP Archive, Central Head Office File 61 62 (Part 2) War Veteran Torch Commando; UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information file 158 (Part 1) War Veteran Torch Commando; UNISA-UP Archive, Division of Information, Subject File 158 (Part 2) War Veterans Torch Commando; Wits Historical Papers, A617, Springbok Legion; South African Who's Who 1948-1976, 1977; Vigne, *Liberals Against Apartheid* , 233-235; Reid, 'The Federal Party, 1953-1962'.